



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



G 60:1 THY

Oxford University  
**ENGLISH FACULTY LIBRARY**

Manor Road, Oxford OX1 3UQ

Telephone: (01865) 271050

Full term Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 7 pm  
 Saturday 9.30 am to 12.30 pm  
 Vacation Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 5 pm  
 Saturday CLOSED

*This book should be returned on or before the latest date below:*

5 JUN 1996	19 OCT 2004
15 OCT 1998	25 JAN 2005
15 OCT 1998	25 OCT 2005
15 OCT 1998	27 OCT 2005
6 NOV 1998	2 NOV 2005
2 NOV 1999	
12 OCT 2000	
15 OCT 2001	
23 OCT 2002	

*Volumes which are lost, defaced, or damaged must be paid for.*



300081470N



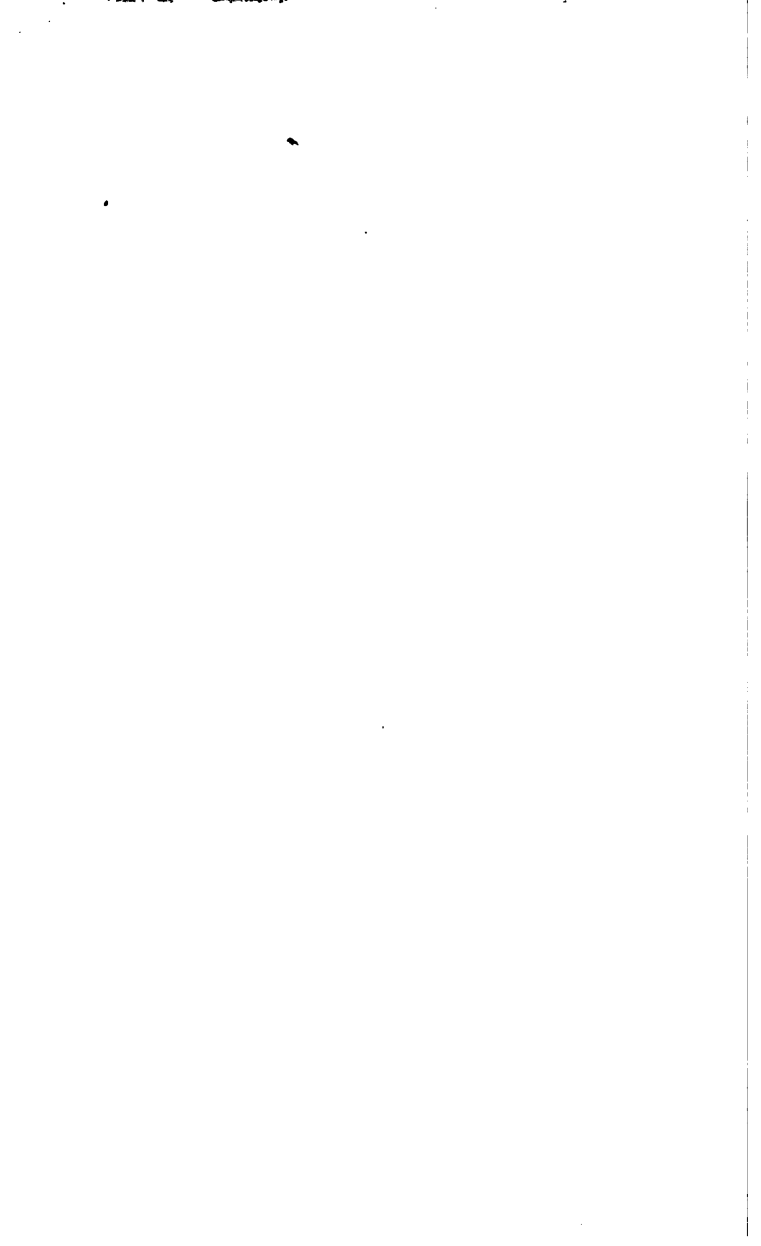
G 60.1 TAY

A handwritten signature or set of initials in dark ink, located in the upper right corner of the page. The script is cursive and somewhat stylized, possibly reading 'M. J.' or similar.

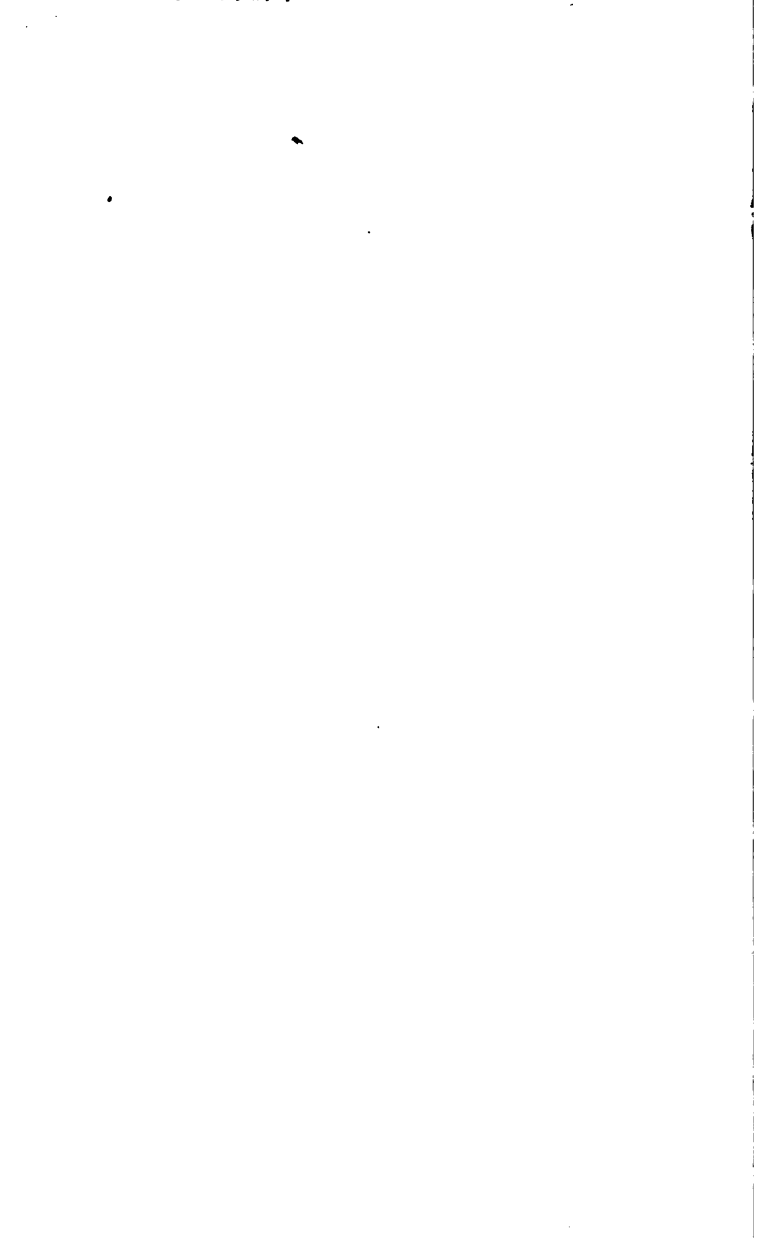
**THE LIFE**

**OF**

**SIR THOMAS MORE.**



AdB





Ad



**SIR THOMAS MORE.**

*Published by Houlston & Son, 65, Paternoster Row, London,  
and at Wellington Salop, Aug.<sup>r</sup> 1. 1834.*

A MEMOIR *Ad. Gifford*  
OF  
SIR THOMAS MORE:

WITH EXTRACTS  
FROM  
HIS WORKS AND LETTERS.

*by*  
*Emily Taylor*

---

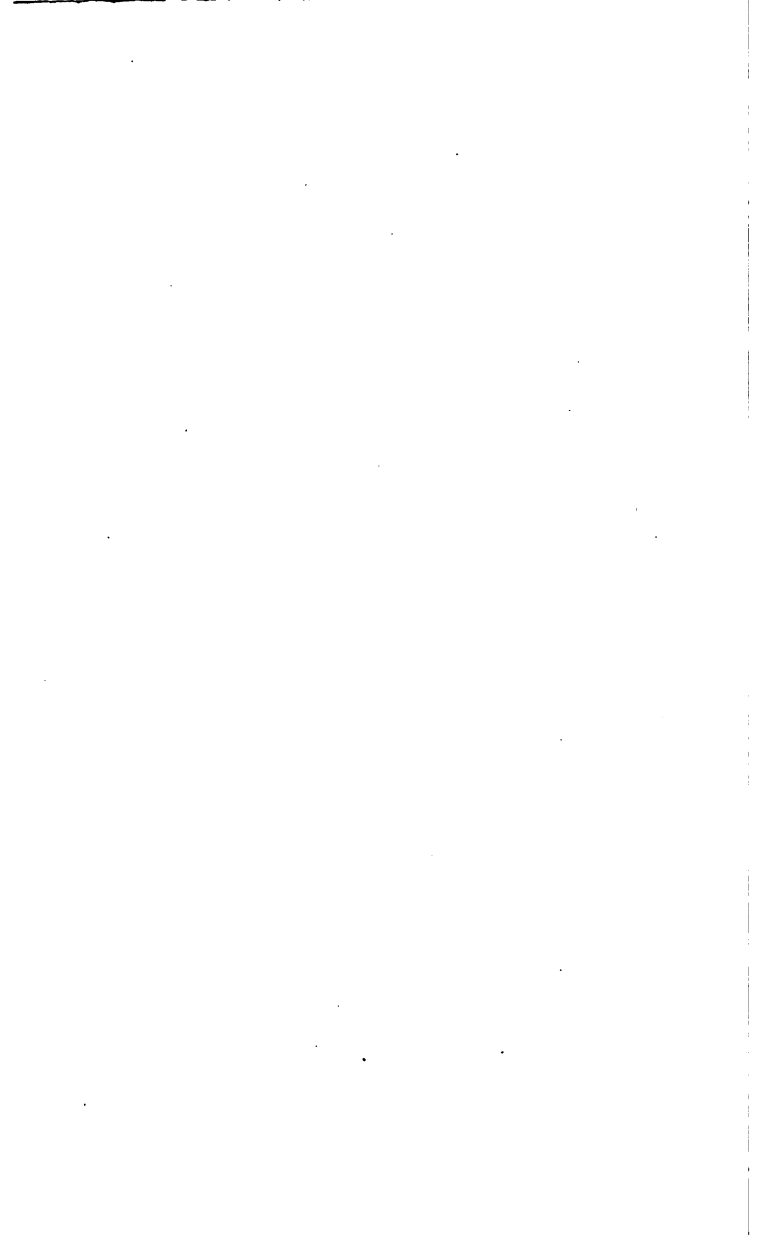
" UOM, DI SENSI E DI COR, LIBERO NATO  
FA DI SE TOSTO INDUBITABIL MOSTRA.  
OR CO' VIZI E I TIRANNI ARDITO EI GIOSTRA  
IGNUDO IL VOLTO, E TUTTO IL RESTO ARMATO."

*ALFIERI.*

---

LONDON:  
PRINTED FOR HOULSTON AND SON,  
65, Paternoster-Row ;  
AND AT WELLINGTON, SALOP.

—  
1834.



## P R E F A C E .

---

THE following pages were, some years ago, prepared for the press. Having long admired the character, and enquired much into the History of Sir Thomas More, I had often seen cause to regret the hasty, and all but universal, adoption of some injurious charges, with regard to a part of that eminent individual's public conduct, which, made at first on the authority of enemies, have been printed and reprinted, believed and commented upon, in total disregard to the evidence on which

they rest, and that on which they may be rebutted.

In all the Lives of More, I believe, with only one exception, that, namely, of Sir A. Cayley, (which, from its bulk, will probably be the least read of any,) the truth of these charges has been taken for granted. It was from a wish to rescue the subject from this summary mode of treatment, as well as from increasing interest in the beautiful works of More, in their advanced and generous spirit, that I was led to write. I thought it, at any rate, right that some cheap and accessible Life of More should cease to repeat, on most questionable authority, stories which make our excellent countryman,—first, a persecutor unto death, and next, a hypocrite.

But in the publication many delays have occurred. Some of them I have taken no pains to obviate, as they concerned the convenience of my publisher: meantime, while the third sheet was in the press, I was informed that a *Life of More*, by the hand of the late Sir James Mackintosh, had appeared in the twenty-first volume of Dr. Lardner's *Cyclopædia*. Had this occurred at an earlier stage of the business, I should, of course, have renounced my own attempt; especially, as I had the great pleasure of finding Sir James's views similar to my own on the point in question.

As it is, it has only so far influenced me as to induce my withdrawing an unimportant name from my title-page; that

I may not have the mortification of appearing, even for a moment, guilty of the presumption of putting it into rivalry with that of a writer, whose learning, information, and ability, were only equalled by his candour and fine moral feeling.

*February, 1834.*



**L I F E**  
**OF**  
**SIR THOMAS MORE.**

---

**SIR Thomas More** was born in Milk-Street, London, in the year 1480; five years before the accession of Henry the Seventh to the throne. Of the public life of his father, Sir John More, we have few particulars up to the time of his appearing as one of the judges of the King's Bench. He is spoken of by cotemporary historians as a man of sound understanding, sweet temper, and lively humour; perfectly just and incorrupt in his public career. Of his domestic concerns we only know that he was twice married, Sir Thomas being the offspring of his first choice, and perform-

ing the office of a dutiful son to his mother-in-law, who survived not only her husband, but the subject of this memoir, and was herself a sufferer in property from his misfortunes.

One Nicholas Holt, a schoolmaster in Threadneedle-Street, has the renown of beginning the classical education of young More: the school was in high repute, and here More seems to have laid a good foundation for his after fame; but at an early period his father removed him, and he found himself placed in the domestic retinue of Cardinal Morton, one of Henry the Seventh's most favoured and most valuable ministers.

In those days of monstrous inequality, when, not wealth and power only, but knowledge, elegance, and nearly all the refinements of life were, with regard to the *lay* part of the community, monopolized by a few favoured individuals, there was no hope of improvement for the aspiring youth

of lowly or, indeed, of middle rank, but what arose from the expectation of finding a powerful and generous patron. It was not merely as a means of gaining worldly honours: laymen of learning and taste were compelled to take hold of this species of patronage if they wished to enjoy the pleasures of good conversation, and to acquire elegant accomplishments. Persons of respectable condition were, therefore, anxious to offer their son's services as the price of advantages otherwise unattainable. Like the squire attending the knight-errant of old, a young gentleman was not ashamed to serve a regular apprenticeship to some noble master; to wait at his table, to carry his train, and perform many menial offices. By means of this voluntary humiliation, he became known to the great, he gained opportunities for acquiring useful information, and was prepared, in these miniature courts, for future eminence in the palace and at the council-board.

The choice made by More's father of a guardian for his son, was wise and fortunate; for Cardinal Morton was one of Henry's most able ministers; and his personal virtues secured him a degree of respect and love which More lost no opportunity of recording in after life. Thus, in his *Utopia*, we find him dwelling with delight on the Cardinal's excellencies.—“In his face did shine such an amiable reverence as was pleasant to behold. Gentle in communication, yet earnest and sage.\* \* \* \* \* In speech he was fine, eloquent, and pithy. In the law he had profound knowledge. In wit he was incomparable: and in memory excellent. These qualities, which in him were by nature singular, he, by learning and use, had made perfect. The king put much trust in his counsel: the public weal also in a manner leaned upon him.”\*

---

\* *Utopia*—Ralph Robinson's translation.

Nor was Morton less attached to his ward. He particularly pointed him out to the attention of his noble and, even, royal guests.—“This child, here waiting at table,” he would say, “whoever shall live to see it, will prove a marvellous man.”

Probably More inherited from his father the lively disposition which always distinguished him; for we find him early signalizing himself in the different theatrical entertainments which took place during the holidays, at the Cardinal's palace: not as an actor, according to our notions of the actor's part, but as a competitor, probably, in those contests of extempore wit and drollery, which were the delight of the age. His patron, however, wisely judging that so promising a young man ought to enjoy every advantage his country had to offer, sent him to Oxford, where he remained two years; being just seventeen at the commencement of his college life. At that early period his friendship with the great

Erasmus began.\* The time was propitious for the formation of a classical taste; for Oxford had then the advantage of possessing two men eminent above any of the age for knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues. Grocyn and Linacre were there; and, in attending their lectures, More found the treasures of ancient learning, thus thrown open to him, a source of new and almost unthought of delight. His father, however, intending him for his own profession, and greatly dreading lest the love of elegant literature should render the study of law distasteful to him, did all that he could do to impede his progress. He withheld from him all supplies of money, but such as were absolutely necessary for his college expences, in order that he might have nothing to spare for books and similar indulgences. More felt this a severe privation; yet he afterwards owned that the

---

\* Jortin's Erasmus.

restraint was perhaps the means of saving him from the dissipation and vice he saw around him. "The college," says Lloyd, "kept him strict, and his father short;" but More afterwards thanked God that, at least, "*he had neither the leisure nor the means to be vicious.*"—The present reluctance, however, which he felt in giving up some of his favourite pursuits, seems to have occasioned him much self-reproach, and, probably, co-operated with some of his earliest religious impressions in leading him to begin that system of personal austerity which he now adopted. For a considerable time his course of life seems to have been one of the most unrelenting self-persecution. He added penance to penance. He mortified himself by fasting and watching; seldom allowing more than four or five hours for sleep in the night: his bed was a hard bench, or the ground, with a log for his pillow; and every Friday, besides other fasting-days, he would sub-

ject himself to the discipline of a hard knotted cord.

It is pitiable to reflect, that at no subsequent period of his life did he rise above these superstitions. His hair shirt, worn next his skin, was scarce ever abandoned at the time of his highest exaltation; and was privately given, with his cord, to his daughter Margaret, on her last visit to him in the Tower, that it might not be imputed to him as a proof of ostentatious piety. But for the remonstrances of his father, he would have ended by enrolling himself in the rigid order of St. Francis; but here, again, and most happily, filial piety prevailed, and he pursued the study of the law. At this time he entered Lincoln's Inn.

Even during the period of youthful devotion to a mistaken sense of religious duty, More does not seem to have laid aside his literary pursuits; while he was most conscientiously industrious in acquiring the



requisite knowledge in his profession. Almost as soon as he commenced practice, he was flattered by every promise of eminence and success. To this, his renown as a lecturer probably contributed not a little; for the young lawyer had already delivered a course of Divinity Lectures on the works of St. Augustine, in the church of St. Laurence, Old Jewry, with so much eloquence and learning, that the most dignified churchmen of the land were not ashamed to be his auditors: and Grocyn, his Oxford master, ranked among them.

In our day, these different avocations would scarcely be thought compatible; but in those times very considerable knowledge in divinity was essential to the character of a lawyer. The highest legal offices in the state were generally filled by ecclesiastics; and More was afterwards a rare instance of a layman being appointed to fill that of chancellor.

About this period, his father persuaded

him to marry. In his choice, we have a singular instance of the refinement of scrupulous delicacy and self-renunciation which always signalized him. It appears, that inclination directed him to the *second* daughter of Mr. John Colte, of Newhall, in Essex; but that "when he thought within himself that this would be a grief and some blemish to the eldest, to see her younger sister preferred before her, he, of a kinde of compassion, settled his fancy on the eldest, and soon after married her, with all her friends' good liking."\* However this might be, the union seems to have been a happy one.

In order to have his wife near his father, More settled himself in a house in Bucklersbury, and diligently applied himself to his profession, to ensure a necessary provision; while he seems to have spared no means of improving his wife's mind, and

---

\* Life, by his great grandson.

rendering her life happy. By him she was instructed in polite literature, and in music, always his delight. But his domestic enjoyments were broken up by her death, after having borne her husband several children, of whom a son and three daughters survived her. Two or three years after her decease, More again married; being directed in his second choice, seemingly, by no other motive than the wish to secure a trusty housekeeper and guardian to his children: in which moderate aim he succeeded; though, in every other respect, the second Mrs. More was opposed in feeling, spirit, and character, to himself. It is not yet time to take a view of him in his domestic and fatherly character; though it is towards *this*, that, in surveying the life of More, the mind is apt to turn with the most unqualified delight and approbation.

In his twenty-third year he was elected a member of the House of Commons, and

had an early opportunity of discharging a difficult duty to his country.—Henry the Seventh having resolved to marry his daughter Margaret to James the Fifth, of Scotland, applied to the Commons for a grant, which, from its amount, or from some dislike of its object, proved very unwelcome. It is most probable, that the insatiable avarice of the king had thoroughly tired out the Commons; for the Scotch match was certainly a popular one, and had received the warmest approbation of the citizens of London: yet young More ventured to stand forth against the demand, and, by his eloquence, and the force of his reasoning, strengthened the courage of the Commons, and procured its rejection. The monarch could not, without resentment, find his wishes thwarted by a beardless youth, just entering into public life; but, in all his chastisements, an accession to his own purse seems to have been carefully considered by Henry the Seventh,

and More was not possessed of wealth: *he*, therefore, was suffered to escape, but his father proved a more tempting object. On a groundless charge, Sir John More was arrested, committed to the Tower, and there confined until his liberty had been purchased by the payment of a hundred pounds, a sum equal to about eight hundred in the present day. Young More, in the mean while, deemed it more prudent to give up his practice at the bar, and retire from all public offices.

It was during this disengaged interval, of about six years, that he appears to have wholly devoted himself to literature and the elegant arts; a period, doubtless, of great happiness and improvement, and during which, in spite of his father's misgivings, the foundation of his future eminence was laid. But the death of the king relieved him from all personal fears; and the accession of Henry the Eighth was followed by the immediate return

both of More himself and his father to office.

The first acts of the new monarch were popular, and calculated to excite an interest in his future progress, both as a man and a king. Before vice and cruelty had tainted the character of Henry the Eighth, he does, indeed, appear to have been one upon whom the eye of a well-wisher to the human race must have turned with complacency and hope. The ardour of his spirit, the frankness of his manners, his attention to public business, his love of learning and accomplishments, his fondness for the conversation of the most eminent men of his time, and the spirit of enterprise so early apparent in his character, a spirit to which every surrounding circumstance was favourable, altogether rendered him eminently likely to prove a monarch such as subjects love to serve. And not at once was this prospect overclouded: Henry, though always a lover of pleasure, and,

from vanity and ambition and personal daring, a lover of war, was not cruel or unjust in the early part of his reign. He gave his subjects the best gift, able ministers and judges; he drew to his court men of talent and learning: but, while these are acknowledged benefits, we must not forget that, in all his actions, there was a decisive preference for whatever might conduce to his own personal aggrandizement; and that, although he was willing to win applause, if possible, in the track of popular virtues, there never, at any period, can be found in his history, traces of the disinterested love of his people. Indeed, if we were required to single out an individual monarch, in whose conduct, through his better as well as more evil days, *selfishness* was the prevailing ingredient, Henry the Eighth must stand preeminent. Well did Sir Thomas More depict the man, when, in reply to his son-in-law's congratulations upon the signal marks of favour he had

received from the king, he said, "I thank our Lord, I find his Grace my very good lord indeed; and I believe he doth as singularly favour me as any subject in this realm: nevertheless, son Roper, I may tell thee, I have no cause to be proud thereof; for, if my head would win him a castle in France, it would not fail to be struck off."

Under the auspices of Henry, More speedily rose to great eminence at the Bar. He is held out by historians as a model of scrupulous adherence to abstract justice, amidst all the temptations of legal sophistry. "When any cause was offered to him, his first care was to ascertain whether justice was on that side upon which he was to be retained: if he found it otherwise, he rejected the cause, whatever bribe might be held out to him, and whatever opportunity it might afford for the display of his talents; assuring the client, that he would not undertake what he knew to be



wrong, for all the wealth in the world." Without pecuniary reward, he advocated the cause of the widow and orphan; while, regardless of interest, he always endeavoured, if possible, to bring contending parties to a private accommodation.

In 1514, More, being now in his thirty-fourth year, was appointed by the city of London judge of the Sheriff's Court; an office then accounted very honourable. Here the same uprightness signalized his conduct: he rejected the customary fees whenever the circumstances of the parties made it inconvenient to pay them; while his diligence enabled him to decide many more causes than was usual in a given time. His high reputation enabled him, at the same time, to derive from his ordinary practice, an income of £400 per annum; a sum more than equal to £3000 at the present day. During this time, he commenced his History of the

Reigns of Edward the Fifth, and Richard the Third, which were never completed.

While Sir Thomas More's time was thus occupied by various public employments and literary pursuits, his royal master made repeated attempts to engage him in a closer attendance upon his person. Henry loved wit and learning, and More was eminent for both. But the king found it nearly as difficult to win him to his service, as, afterwards, to bend him to his will in a matter of conscience. Indeed, there is no trait in the character of More more decidedly marked than a degree of independence amounting almost to obstinacy. He was singular and original in his views and habits, disliked all influence and restraint, and went to court without imbibing in the smallest degree the spirit of a courtier. If, as is pretty certain, he at this time wrote his *Utopia*, our knowledge of the circumstances of the man may

give an additional zest to our enjoyment of the author. Many passages may be adduced, as intended, in a pleasant but not very courtierlike way, to communicate to the king his opinion of the service to which he was required to devote himself. "Now I live," says his hero, "after my own mind and pleasure, which I think very few of these great statesmen and peers of the realm can say. \* \* \* \* \* In losing my own quietness, I should no way further the common good: for, in the first place, *most princes have more delight in warlike matters, and feats of chivalry, (the knowledge of which I neither possess, nor desire to possess,)* than in the good arts of peace: and employ more pains about enlarging their dominions, by good or evil means, than about ruling well and peaceably those they already have."—"If I should boldly rise up in the council, and declare that the community chooseth their king for their own sake, and not for his sake, to the intent that,

through his labour and study, they might all live wealthy and happy, safe from wrong and injury : that, therefore, the king should take more care for the wealth of his people than for his own; even as the office and duty of a shepherd is, in that he is a shepherd, to feed his sheep rather than himself,—shall not I, think you, have deafhearers?”\*—Again, “ For as touching this, that they think the defence and maintenance of peace to consist in poverty of the people; the thing itself sheweth that they be far out of the way: for where shall a man find more wrangling, quarrelling, brawling, and chiding, than among beggars? Who be more desirous of new mutations, and alterations, than they that be not content with the present state of their life? Or, finally, who be bolder stomached, to bring all in a hurly-burly, (thereby trusting to get some windfall,)

---

\* Utopia—Ralph Robinson’s translation.

than they that have now nothing to lose? And if any king were so smally regarded, and so lightly esteemed, yea, so behated by his subjects, that otherwise he could not keep them in awe, but only by open wrongs, by polling and shaving, and bringing them to beggarie; surely, it were better for him to forsake his kingdom, than to hold it by such means; whereby, though the name of a king be kept, yet the majesty is lost: for it is against the dignity of a king to have rule over beggars; but rather over rich and wealthy men. And, verily, one man to live in pleasure and wealth, while all other weep and smart for it, that is the part, not of a king, but of a gaoler," &c. &c.\*

That More loved and compassionated the people; that his heart was with the many rather than the few; and that their circumstances continually occupied his

---

\* Utopia—Ralph Robinson's translation.

thoughts, can be proved by abundant testimony: but we may safely affirm, that his Utopia was the very offspring of such a state of heart and mind. Our modern political economists may often find him in error; but they, at least, must allow that his mistakes are those of a man sickened by oppression and encroachment, and ardently desirous of promoting the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Throughout the book, he constantly appears as the poor man's friend; the friend, too, of rational freedom, and, to a large extent, of liberty of conscience.

When a Christian convert among the Utopians begins, as soon as he is baptized, with more zeal than wisdom, not only to prefer his own religion above every other, but to despise and condemn all others; calling them profane, and their followers wicked, and devilish, and children of everlasting damnation,—“When,” says Hyth-

Iodæus, "he had thus long reasoned the matter, they laid hold of him, and condemned him to exile; not as a despiser of religion, but as a seditious person, and a raiser of dissension among the people: for this is one of the ancient laws among them, that no one shall be blamed for reasoning in the maintenance of his own religion. King Utopus," he tells us, "thought it indecent and foolish for any man to threaten and terrify another, to make him believe what did not strike him as true. Supposing only one form of religion to be true, and the rest false, he imagined that the innate force of truth would at last break forth, and shine with splendour, if supported only by the strength of reason, and attended to by a docile and unprejudiced mind. On the other hand, were such debates carried on with violence and tumult, since the most wicked are ever the most obstinate, the best and holiest religion might be choked with

superstition, as corn is with thorns and briars.”\*

As remarkable, and as much beyond the spirit of his time, are Sir Thomas More's views respecting capital punishment. Here, too, we trace, not only the man of humanity, but the experienced statesman. Holingshed tells us, that no less than seventy-two thousand individuals suffered death by the hands of the executioner, during the reign of Henry the Eighth. Now, though many of these were, doubtless, religious and political offenders, the proportion of those so sacrificed, at the period in which More wrote, could be but small: and, by the great pains which he has taken to argue the point, in *Utopia*, we may infer that the ferocity of the law had been frequently the subject of his lamentation. He puts into the mouth of an Englishman an eulogium on the “whole-

---

\* *Utopia*—Cayley, page 139.



some severity" of the laws against thieves; who, as he said, were then hanged so fast that there were sometimes twenty on one gibbet! and yet "he could not wonder enough how it came to pass, that, since so few escaped, there were yet so many thieves left, still robbing in all places:" and makes his opponent reply—"Surely, I think it not right, nor justice, that the loss of money should cause the loss of man's life. My opinion is, that all the goods in the world are not equal in value to life:—and, if it be said that the suffering is not for the money, but for the breach of the law, I answer, extreme justice is an extreme injury. For we ought not to approve of those terrible laws, which make the smallest offences capital; nor of that opinion of the stoics which maketh all crimes equal: as if no difference were to be made between killing a man, and stealing his purse; between which, in reality, there is the greatest disproportion. God

hath commanded us *not to kill*: shall we then kill for a little money? And if it be said, the command extendeth not to cases where the laws of the land allow of killing, on the same ground, laws may be made, in some cases, to allow of perjury and adultery. God having taken from us the right of disposing either of our own lives, or of those of others,\* if it be pretended that the mutual consent of mankind in framing laws, can authorize death in cases where God hath given us no example, that it supersedeth the obligation of the Divine law, and maketh murder lawful, what is this, but to prefer human to Divine laws? Admit this, and men may, in all cases, lay what restrictions they please on God's laws. If by the Mo-

---

\* Yet, by a great inconsistency, More has made it lawful, among the Utopians, for a man to commit suicide, in case of a lingering illness which admits of no remedy, provided, only, he follows the advice of the priests, who are allowed to violate what above he seems to consider the prohibition of God.

saical law, though severe, being made for a stubborn people, fine, and not death, was the punishment for theft, we cannot imagine, that in our new and merciful law, in which God treateth us with the tenderness of a father, he hath allowed of greater cruelty than to the Jews. On these grounds it is, that I think putting thieves to death not lawful. And it is obviously absurd, and prejudicial to the commonwealth, that theft and murder should be punished alike. For, if a robber find that his danger is the same if he be convicted of theft, as if he had been guilty of murder, he will be incited to kill the person, whom, otherwise, he would only have robbed: since, the punishment being the same, there is less danger of discovery when he who can best make it is killed. Thus, terrifying thieves too much provoketh them to cruelty.\*

---

\* Cayley's Translation, *Life of More*, vol. ii. page 29.

Again : “ Not only you English,” observes Hythlodæus, “ but a great part of the world, imitate bad schoolmasters, who are readier to chastise their scholars, than to teach them. Dreadful punishments are inflicted on thieves ; but it were better to make good provisions that all might know how to gain a livelihood, and be preserved from the necessity of stealing, and of dying for it. If,” he adds, “ you suffer your people to be ill-educated and corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else can be concluded from this, than that you first make thieves, and then punish them ? ”

Thus did More write respecting the evils of a sanguinary criminal code, and the prevention of crime, by removing some of the causes which immediately lead to it. Whatever opinion may be entertained of the fanciful and impracticable character of

some of his political speculations, much praise and admiration are due to the writer, who has so skilfully connected the ideas of virtue and industry, idleness and vice, throughout all the institutions of his imaginary commonwealth. He seems to be fully aware that extreme poverty is an evil, not merely (as many think it) because of the bodily privations it brings, but, because it is a bar to that cultivation of all the powers which cannot be withheld, without, so far, crippling human nature itself. Therefore it is, that he makes all the people moderately industrious, that none may be wholly without leisure. He provides for their employment, but carefully guards their hours of recreation from every tyrannical encroachment. Their nobles are the learned of the land: their priests, a small, select band, holiest among the holy, upon whose conduct and character the breath of suspicion never blows. The path of promotion is open to all, in

the honourable way of patient industry; and all those pursuits which refine and elevate human character, are the daily objects which, from youth to age, present themselves before an Utopian.

The reader will hereafter find that the domestic establishment of Sir Thomas More was, as far as the parallel circumstances allowed, framed in complete conformity with his scheme of an imaginary republic.

We know not whether Henry the Eighth was among the believers in the actual existence of this extraordinary commonwealth: but, by several grave and zealous divines of that day, a mission, for the conversion of the amiable Utopians to Christianity, was proposed with great seriousness. However that may be, none could long remain in such a delusion; and Henry, considering the political and religious views as More's own, must be allowed to have shewn some liberality and fear-

lessness, in his strengthened desire to retain him in his counsels, and draw him nearer to his person. Wisely for himself, but most unfortunately for More, did the king urge this, and at length succeed. The able manner in which he had argued the claims of the monarch against those of the pope, in the matter of a papal vessel which had been seized at Southampton, by the English, was the immediate occasion of his elevation. Immediately after this, in 1517, we find him knighted, and a privy-counsellor. His active services appear to have been put into speedy requisition, in consequence of a disturbance in the city of London, the immediate occasion of which was as follows.—The citizens of London had long been exceedingly jealous of the encroachments of foreign artificers; in whose hands a large part of the mercantile and mechanical business of the city and country reposed. The inns and houses of entertainment, and much of the

wholesale and retail trade, being conducted by Italians and other foreigners, despite of an act passed in the short reign of Richard the Third, for the protection of the English tradesmen and mechanics, and the expulsion of foreign artificers;—such was the discontent of the London citizens in particular, that, by means of one of their number, John Lincoln, a broker, they applied to Doctor Bell, canon of Spital, who was appointed to preach the Spital sermon, on Tuesday in Easter week, and required him to read a bill of grievances from the pulpit,—also, to preach in behalf of the people, and against the foreign artificers. The divine complied; and, preaching from this text, “The heaven is the Lord’s, but the earth hath he given to the children of men;” proceeded to shew, that this land was given to Englishmen; and, as birds defend their nests, so ought Englishmen to cherish and maintain themselves, and to



hurt and grieve aliens for respect of their commonwealth.”\*

Taking advantage of this assistance, the London apprentices and common people grew bolder in their animosity against the foreigners, whom they continually insulted in the streets. May-day was now approaching; an universal holiday, when every substantial citizen turned his back on business, and went out Maying into the woods and meadows; some to Shooter’s Hill, where even the king and queen were entertained by “a company of tall yeomen, clothed all in green, with green hoods, and with bows and arrows, their chieftain being called Robin Hood.” On this day of rejoicing, a rumour arose that all the aliens in the city were to be put to death,—a report which gained more credit with the king’s council than in the court of aldermen: the former having deputed Sir Thomas More to

---

\* Maitland’s London. Also Stowe’s Chronicle.

issue a mandate, that no man, after nine o'clock on May-eve, should stir out, but keep his doors shut and servants within, till nine next morning.

Whether any such conspiracy as has been adverted to was actually formed, has never been made known: but the disturbance which followed, seems to have arisen from the violence of one of the aldermen, Sir John Mundy; who, finding two young men playing at Buckler's, in Cheapside, while others looked on, when as yet the order from council was scarce published, ordered them to desist; and, on their enquiring the reason, threatened them with the Compter: upon which the apprentices and their friends, highly indignant, raised a mob of the common people, who first put the alderman to flight; then, collecting by degrees, in a force of six or eight hundred, broke open the Compter prison, and also Newgate, in which were several prisoners, committed for violence

done to the foreigners. At Saint Martin's gate, however, they were met by Sir Thomas More and others, who nearly succeeded in persuading them to return peaceably home; but, some wanton individuals having thrown stones at one of More's companions, the confusion became general; and it was necessary to call in military force, which soon conquered an army consisting only of unskilful and half-clothed men, women, and boys.

Of this mob, one thousand three hundred were taken prisoners, four hundred condemned, and thirteen led out to immediate execution: but one only, Lincoln, actually suffered death; the rest being released at the earnest importunity of the queen, and of the king's sisters, Mary of France, and Margaret of Scotland. The king's closet presented the singular spectacle, on this occasion, of three queens soliciting, on their knees, the king's pardon for an infuriated mob; which, it is probable, would

not have been granted but for the persuasion of Wolsey, to whom Henry could refuse nothing.

In 1519, Sir Thomas More obtained still further promotion, being raised to the dignity of treasurer to the exchequer: and two years afterwards, by the king's special direction, he was chosen Speaker of the House of Commons. In Parliament, not only was his conduct honourable, but his views more profound than those of his cotemporaries. On one occasion, a subsidy having been demanded by government, for carrying on a war against the Emperor, the Commons allowed its expediency, but hesitated to grant it, on the ground that, as it must be paid in money and not in goods, all the coin in their hands would be drained away: and, for want of money, the nation would soon relapse into barbarism. More, in reply, ridiculed this idea, and said that the money ought not to be considered as lost or taken

away, but only passed into other hands of their kindred and nation. "You have no reason," added he, "to fear this penury or scarceness of money, the intercourse of things being so established throughout the world, that there is a perpetual derivation of all that can be necessary to mankind. Thus your commodities will ever find out money: while, not to go too far, I shall produce your own merchants only; who, let me assure you, will always be as glad of your corn and cattle, as you can be of any thing they bring you."\*

Cardinal Wolsey, at this period of More's history, was supreme in the king's favour, and in actual power at the court. Yet the Speaker of the House of Commons boldly opposed him, when justice required him so to do: and, not long after his first appointment to this office, such

---

\* Life and Reign of Henry the Eighth, by Lord Herbert of Cherbury. Edition 1741, page 112.

an occasion arose. The king, reduced to great straits by his extravagance, sent the Cardinal to the Commons; hoping that his presence, when the supplies were moved, would overawe them, and induce a more liberal grant than usual. Previous to the arrival, however, of Wolsey, the House having intimation of his intention, consulted whether they should admit the Cardinal with that whole retinue of followers by which this boastful man was usually attended, or only accompanied by a few of the lords. It seems that Wolsey had recently expressed great indignation with the Commons, because nothing "could be done or spoken in both the Houses, but it was immediately blown abroad in every alehouse."

"My masters," said Sir Thomas, addressing the House, "forasmuch as my lord Cardinal lately, ye wot well, laid to our charge the lightness of our tongues, for things uttered out of this house, it

should not, in my mind, be amiss to receive him with all his pomp, with his maces, his pillars, his poleaxes, his cross, his hat, and the great seal too ; to the intent that, if he find the like fault with us then, we may lay the blame upon them whom his grace bringeth with him."

The House agreeing to this, the Cardinal was received accordingly ; and, with much persuasion, endeavoured to convince the House of the reasonableness of the demand, and the expediency of complying with it. Every member remaining silent, the Speaker at last replied in the negative, in the name of all ; proving, besides, that such a mode of making the demand was contrary to all precedent. Whereupon Wolsey, in great displeasure, abruptly rose and quitted the House. A few days after, happening to meet with More, he exclaimed, " I would to God, you had been at Rome, Mr. More, when I made you Speaker !"

“Your grace not offended, so would I, too, my lord,” replied Sir Thomas; “for then I should have seen the place I have long desired to see.” \*

The good humour of this repartee by no means softened Wolsey; who, besides, was probably jealous of More’s increasing favour with the king: and made it, from this time, his endeavour to get rid of him; representing him to Henry, as well fitted to be his ambassador in foreign courts, and particularly to that of Spain. In this he was foiled by the direct simplicity of More: who, upon the first mention of the intended honour, represented to his sovereign, that the climate of Spain was very ill suited to his constitution, and would, probably, bring him to an early grave: an excuse which was immediately admitted.

Let us now turn, for a while, to the do-

---

\* More’s Life, by his Great Grandson.



mestic life of More. The mother of his children died, as we have said, in their infancy; and More, hard pressed with private and public business, had conceived it his duty to marry again; seeking, principally, the qualifications of a trusty manager of his large household. His second wife was a widow, much older than himself, and neither pleasing in person nor manners. He wanted an economist; but, unfortunately, she appears to have been a scold: and though it is said that she "proved a kind and careful mother-in-law to his children," she shewed herself utterly unable to enter into the magnanimity of her husband's character. It is amusing to find that, in order to calm her temper, and draw off her mind from over anxiety respecting her domestic concerns, her husband prevailed on her to take lessons on several musical instruments, and to devote a part of every day to some elegant accomplishments. At the same

time, his playful wit was ever ready to parry her severe reproaches for his easiness and tranquillity under the loss of worldly advantages. The following letter to her, is given as a specimen of his manner of treating these subjects. The immediate occasion which produced it, was a fire, which had consumed part of his house, all his barns, and some of those of his neighbours, during his absence at Woodstock.

“ MISTRESS ALICE,

“ In my most hearty wise I recommend me to you. And whereas I am informed by my son Heron, of the loss of our barns, and our neighbours' also, with all the corn that was therein; albeit, (saving God's pleasure,) it is a great pity of so much good corn lost, yet, as it has liked him to send us such a chance, we must, and are bounden, not only to be content, but also to be glad of his visitation. He sent us all we have lost; and since he hath, by such a chance, taken it away again, his pleasure be fulfilled. Let us never grudge thereat, but take it in good worth, and heartily thank him, as well for adver-

sity as prosperity. And, peradventure, we have more cause to thank him for our loss than for our winning; for his wisdom better seeth what is good for us, than we do ourselves. Therefore, I pray you, be of good cheer, and take all the household with you to church, and there thank God, both for that he hath given us, and for that which he hath taken from us, and for that which he hath left us; which, if it please him, he can increase when he will; and, if it please him to leave us yet less, at his pleasure be it!

“I pray you to make good onsearch what my poor neighbours have lost, and bid them take no thought therefore: for, if I should not leave myself a spoon, there shall be no poor neighbour of mine bear no loss by my chance, happened in my house. I pray you be, with my children and your household, merry in God: and devise somewhat with your friends, what way were best to take for provision to be made for corn for our household, and for seed this year coming, if we think it good that we keep the ground still in our hands. And whether we think it good that we so shall do or not, yet I think it were not best suddenly thus to leave it all up, and to put away our folk from our farm, till we have somewhat advised us thereon. Howbeit, if we have more now than we shall need, and which can get them

other masters, ye may then discharge us of them : but I would not that any man were suddenly sent away, he wot not whither.

“ At my coming hither, I perceived none other than that I should have to abide the king’s grace : but now I shall, I think, because of this chance, get leave to come home and see you ; and then we shall further devise together upon all things, what order shall be best to take.

“ And thus, as heartily fare you well, with all our children, as ye can wish ! At Woodstock, the third day of September, by the hand of

THOMAS MORE.”

In educating his children, More seems to have combined the most winning manner of imparting instruction, with very high ideas of the value of learning. In nothing is he more remarkable, than in his eagerness to render his daughters, in particular, rich in mental resources, and fit companions for men of eminence in literature and talent. His view of the advantages of study, as respects the forma-

tion of the female character, gives a more decisive proof of his own elevation above the notions of his time, than any other fact. The fashions of a court, one of the gayest ever known, were most unfavourable to the cultivation of solid learning in females: and More, perhaps, had the singular merit of first resisting the influence of example, and making the women of his family, learned, studious, and sedate. Certain it is, that from this period, a higher idea of the capacities of female character seems to have been introduced into this country. The princesses Mary and Elizabeth were carefully educated. Elizabeth read the Greek poets and the most difficult Latin authors, besides speaking and writing both these learned languages;\* and Ann Askew and Lady Jane Grey are cited as still more eminently accomplished. In some instan-

---

\* See Ascham's Letter.

ces it is probable that these studies terminated in an acquaintance with the writings of the Fathers ; but it was a great step, in such a period, to make the admission that woman was worthy of being raised above the mere plaything, or domestic drudge.

A most delightful account of " Thomas More's school," as his domestic academy was commonly called, has been given us in the letters of his learned and faithful friend Erasmus ; and we have yet more valuable treasures in the letters of More himself to his children and their tutor whenever absent from them. The school consisted of his own four children, a step-daughter by his second wife, and an orphan girl, whom he generously educated with his daughters, and who appears to have partaken, equally with them, of his love and care. Afterwards, when his son and daughters married, as the family could not endure the idea of separation, More contrived to accommodate them all in his

own house at Chelsea, as well as, in the end, eleven grandchildren, who were the fruit of these marriages.\* The unsullied reputation and prosperity of the family were no less conspicuous than its harmony. "The happiness of that house," says Erasmus, "seems secured by a sort of fatality. No one has lived in it without having his condition improved; no one has had a stain thrown on his reputation."† Again: "I should call this house the academy of Plato, were it not injustice to compare it to a place where the usual disputations concerning figures and numbers were only occasionally interspersed with disquisitions about the moral virtues. A house in which every one studies the liberal sciences, where the principal care is virtue and piety; where idleness never appears; where intemperate language is never heard; where regularity

---

\* Macdiarmid and Cayley.    † Erasmus.

and order are prescribed by the mere force of kindness and courtesy ; where every one performs his duty, and yet all are so cheerful, as if mirth were their only employment ;—such a house ought rather to be called a practical school of the Christian religion.” \*

The private manners of the gentry of England were not, however, if we may credit Erasmus, very congenial to our own ideas. He speaks of the stifling apartments lighted by lattices, so contrived as to prohibit the occasional and salutary admission of air ; glass being then only used in churches, and in the largest mansions ; the floors, he says, were of clay, strewn with rushes most foul and loathsome, collecting and retaining for twenty years the offals of the table : and it is to this and other uncleanly habits of the English, that he attributes the frequent visita-

---

\* Stapylton.



tions of the plague. As for the huts of the peasants, they were most wretched. The farm-houses usually divided into two apartments; the outer for servants, the inner for the owner and his wife. Chimneys were the luxuries of a higher rank: in *these* the fire was kindled against a *rere dosse* in the middle of the hall, and the smoke escaped through a perforation in the roof.

To return to More. Such was the sweetness of his temper, that his son-in-law, Roper, who lived in his house for sixteen years, assures us that never during all that time did he see his countenance clouded, or hear his voice raised in anger. Any trifling quarrel which happened to arise in the family was quickly settled by his pleasant and kind suggestions; and even Mrs. More, who for a long time was by no means tractable, appears to have been so far subdued by the uniform good-temper of the family,

that she performed her part towards his children in a way to gain both their love and respect. Had it not been so, they would hardly have desired to remain under their father's roof after a settlement in marriage.

It is also recorded, that so thoroughly did the taste for learning and liberal accomplishments pervade More's whole establishment, that, if even a servant discovered an ear for music, or a talent for any particular accomplishment, it was sure to be encouraged. By this means the large train of followers which every man of consequence was obliged in those days to retain in his service, was kept in a state of regular discipline, and of moral and mental improvement, almost unknown in the country. The provisions for maintaining this order and banishing corrupt communications were admirable. Throughout the large establishment resources of all kinds were provided:—a noble library, a museum of

natural history, musical instruments, and astronomical apparatus; gardens extensive and admirably laid out; while, at meals, to prevent that sort of trifling or improper conversation before children and servants which More had so much reason to dread, he ordered a domestic to read aloud such books as might in themselves prove amusing, and afterwards furnish matter for entertaining conversation.\*

Two or three of his letters to his children during one of his temporary absences, which have been happily preserved, may be acceptable to the reader.

---

\* See Utopia.—“They begin every dinner and supper with reading something that pertaineth to good manners and virtue; but it is short, that no man may be wearied with it; and upon it the elders take occasion of honest communication, but neither sad nor unpleasant. \* \* \* \* They gladly hear, also, the young men, and purposely provoke them to talk, that they may have a proof of every man’s wit.”

**“THOMAS MORE TO HIS WHOLE SCHOOL.**

**“You see what a device I have found to save paper and avoid the labour of writing all your names. But, although you are so dear to me, that if I had named one, I must have named all the rest, yet there is no appellation under which you are dearer to me than that of scholar: the tie of learning seems almost to bind me to you more powerfully than even that of nature. I am glad therefore that Mr. Drue is again safely returned to you, as you know I had some reason to be anxious about him. If I did not love you so much, I should envy you the happiness of possessing so many and such excellent masters. I understand Mr. Nicholas is also with you, and that you are with his assistance making such prodigious progress in astronomy, as not only to know the Pole-star, and the Dog, and such common constellations, but, even, with a skill which bespeaks truly accomplished astronomers, to be able to discover the sun from the moon. Go on, then, with this new and wonderful science, by which you may ascend to the stars: and while you diligently consider them with your eyes, let this holy season raise your minds also to heaven; lest, while your eyes are lifted up to the skies, your souls should grovel among the brutes. Adieu, my dearest children.”**

**“THOMAS' MORE TO HIS DEAR CHILDREN,  
AND TO MARGARET GIGGS, WHOM HE NUM-  
BERS AMONG HIS CHILDREN.**

“The merchant of Bristol brought me your letters the day after he received them from you. I need not say that I was exceedingly delighted, for nothing can come from your hands, so rude and negligent, as would not give me more satisfaction than the most laboured production from any other person; so much does my affection endear your writings to me: but, happily, they need nothing to render them agreeable, beyond their own intrinsic merit, their pleasantry, and elegant Latin. There was not one of your letters which did not charm me: but, to speak sincerely, John's letter pleased me most; because it was longer than the others, and because he appeared to have written it with more study and pains; for he has not only prettily described and neatly expressed whatever he says, but with much pleasantry, and not a little shrewdness, retorts my jests: yet so temperately, as well as agreeably, does he manage his repartees, that he shews he never forgets that it is to his father he writes, and whom he fears to offend, while he studies to amuse him.

“Now I expect a letter from each of you

almost every day that I am absent; neither will I have any such excuse, as the shortness of the time, the hasty departure of the messenger, the want of any thing to say,—excuses which John never makes: for nobody prevents you from writing; and, as to the messenger, may you not be beforehand with him, by having your letters always written and sealed, to wait any opportunity? But, as to the want of matter, how can that ever take place when you write to me? to me, who am gratified to hear either of your studies or amusements; who shall be pleased to hear you, at great length, inform me that you have nothing at all to say; which certainly must be a very easy task, especially for women, who are said to be always most fluent upon nothing. This, however, let me impress upon your remembrance; that, whether you write of serious subjects, or the merest trifles, you write always with care and attention. Nor will it be amiss, if you first write all your letters in English, which you will afterwards translate much more successfully, and with much less fatigue, into Latin, while the mind is free from the labour of invention, and solely occupied with the expression. But, while I leave it to your own judgments, I enjoin you by all means to examine what you write with great care, before you make out a fair copy. Consider the sentences

first in the order in which they are placed, and then attend minutely to their several parts. By this means you will easily discover any improper expression into which you may have fallen; and, even after you have corrected it, and written out a fair copy, do not account it irksome still to examine it again: for in copying over, we are apt to fall into errors which we had already noticed or corrected. By this diligence, your trifles will, in a short time, be of importance: for as there is nothing so witty and pointed as that it may not be rendered insipid by a stupid and awkward mode of expression; so there is nothing so silly in itself, as that it may not, by skilful management, acquire a pleasant and graceful turn."

**"THOMAS MORE TO MARGARET, ELIZABETH, CECILIA, HIS BELOVED DAUGHTERS, AND TO MARGARET GIGGS, WHOM HE LOVES NOT LESS THAN IF SHE WERE HIS DAUGHTER BY BIRTH.**

"I cannot express, my sweet girls, the exquisite pleasure I received from your elegant letters. Nor am I less gratified to find, that, though you are upon a tour, and frequently changing your residence, you omit none of your accustomed exercises. Now, indeed, I believe

that you love me, since you do in my absence what you know would give me the greatest pleasure if I were present: and, as I see you do every thing to gratify me, it shall be my part to make your attentions profitable to yourselves. Believe me, there is nothing more refreshes me, amidst the fatigues of business, than when I read what has been written by you. Were it not for the evidence before me, I might have suspected that your teacher was led astray by his affections, in the flattering accounts he gave me of your progress; but, from what you write, you induce me to believe him, though his praises of your elegance and acuteness in disputation, might otherwise well exceed my faith. Therefore, I am most anxious to return home to you, that I may compare *my* scholar with you. He cannot believe that he will not find some exaggeration in your master's account. But, for my part, as I know how indefatigable you are, I have no doubt that if you do not overcome your master himself in disputation, you will at least not give up the point. Adieu, my dearest girls."

The progress of these young people fully came up to their father's wishes and expectations. The son was not endued with much talent; but, by judicious manage-



ment, he became a good scholar, and a useful, respectable man. The daughters read, wrote, and conversed in Latin with perfect ease and correctness.

In Sir Thomas More's letters to Mrs. Roper the reader may be struck with the importance, rather disproportioned, perhaps, to its object, attached by him to learning: the encomiums bestowed on her progress are such as no mere acquirements can deserve; but their novelty was a strong temptation in those days to overrate them. The taste of the times certainly appears to have been that of romance-reading, with which the press of Caxton had in the two preceding reigns furnished the nation with some store: and the clergy rather encouraged it, in order to divert the attention of the people from the theological questions then beginning to be much agitated. Thus Tyndall, in his "Obedience of a Christian Man," in 1528, says, "This forbidding the lay people to read the Scriptures is not for

love of your souls is evident, inasmuch as they permit you to read Robin Hood, and Bevys of Hampton, Hercules, Hector, and Troilus, with a thousand histories and fables of love, and wantonness, and ribaldry, to corrupt the minds of youth." From the absence of all allusion to these popular books in More's letters to his "School," and in his biographers' accounts of him, it is not perhaps an unfair inference, that one of his reasons for insisting much on the study of the learned languages might be as a substitute for this species of literature.

On the other hand he says, writing to Gunnel, the tutor of his children,

"What gave me the most unfeigned pleasure, was to learn that Elizabeth had maintained in her mother's absence that modest and respectful behaviour, which few do when their mothers are present. Tell her that this conduct is more gratifying to me than the possession of all the learning in the world: for, as I prefer learning united with virtue, to all the treasures of princes; so I look

upon the reputation of learning, when separated from good morals, as merely infamy rendered notorious and conspicuous. This more especially is the case with regard to women, whose knowledge, as a novelty and as a reproach on the indolence of men, the world is eager to attach and to lay on letters the vices of their disposition, imagining that, from the faults of the learned, their own ignorance will pass for virtue. \* \* \* \* \*

“ I have dwelt at greater length on the impropriety of directing the mind to applause, because, my dear Gunnel, you have, in your letter, declared it as your opinion, that the lofty and aspiring genius of my Margaret ought not to be curbed. In this judgment I entirely agree; and I trust you will also allow with me, that a habit of fixing the mind on vain and meaner ends depresses and degrades a generous and noble disposition: while, on the other hand, *that* mind is exalted which aspires to virtue and to real good, neglecting those shadows which men usually mistake for solid benefits. It is from a conviction of these truths, my dear Gunnel, that I have entreated not only you, who, I knew, would willingly second my aims, from your tender regard to all my children; that I have not only entreated my wife, whose maternal tenderness sufficiently impels her to the most earnest endeavours; but that I

have also entreated all my friends to take every opportunity of warning my children to avoid the precipices of pride and vanity, and walk in the smooth and level paths of modesty; to look without emotion on the glare of gold; and not to sigh for those things which they falsely admired in another. I have entreated my friends to admonish them, that they should not value themselves more when possessed of beauty, nor less when deprived of it; that they should not, through negligence, deface the comeliness which nature may have given them, nor endeavour to increase it by improper arts; that they should account virtue their chief good, learning the second; that from learning they ought to derive its most sublime lessons—piety towards God, benevolence towards all men, modesty of the heart, and Christian humility. By such a conduct as this, they will secure to themselves, from God, the rewards of an innocent life; in the certain expectation of which, they need not be afraid of death; and being possessed of a solid source of pleasure, will neither be buoyed up by empty applauses, nor cast down by unjust reproaches. These I look upon as the true and genuine fruits of learning; and, as I acknowledge that all the learned do not obtain them, so I maintain that those who begin to study with this intention, may easily obtain this happy issue."

More's house was the constant resort of the most accomplished men of his time. His friendships were many and faithful. "By no one," says Erasmus, speaking of him, "are friendships more readily formed, more diligently cultivated, more stedfastly retained. If he discovers any one with whom he has formed an intimacy to be irreclaimably vicious, he gradually discontinues the intimacy, but never breaks it off in an abrupt or mortifying manner.

\*\*\*\*\* An utter enemy to all gaming, and to all those unmeaning amusements by which the idle part of society endeavour to escape from the insupportable languor of existence, his leisure hours are spent in the conversation of a circle where his own politeness, ease, and vivacity, diffuse universal good-humour and gaiety. To sum up his character in a few words, if the pattern of a perfect friend be required, let it be sought for in More." Of his personal appearance, Erasmus adds, "he is

rather below than above the middle size; his countenance of an agreeable and friendly cheerfulness, with somewhat of an habitual inclination to smile; and appears more adapted to pleasantry than to gravity or dignity, though perfectly remote from vulgarity or silliness."

The delightful manners and conversation of More so attached the king to his society, that it soon became apparent to the minister, that he must either give up his family enjoyments, or devise some means of making himself less necessary to his sovereign in his hours of recreation. At first, he had appeared in his natural character, full of wit and pleasantry, at court; but, finding that it was with much ado that he could gain permission to spend one evening in a month with his beloved family, and feeling this an insupportable privation, he gradually suppressed the pleasantry and lively humour which had endeared him to Henry; and his company being found less

exhilarating, he was, by degrees, allowed to withdraw himself, without being questioned on the subject. Yet still the king loved him. Often would he send for him in the night, to mount the roof of the palace, and assist him in his astronomical observations. Often did they discourse on those knotty points of theological debate then brought forward to especial notice by the zeal of Luther. And sometimes it would happen that the king would come, without previous notice, to surprise his minister at Chelsea, and partake of his private entertainments. It was after one of these visits, when Henry had been walking in the garden for an hour in earnest conversation, with his arm familiarly thrown round More's neck, that the latter made that significant declaration of his entire want of trust in the good faith of the monarch, which we have before recorded. Even then, the foundation for the minister's ruin was laid. Henry, anxious

to obtain the sanction of the most eminent men in the land to his projected divorce from Catherine,\* was more particularly solicitous to gain that of Sir Thomas More; but, from the first, he found the opinion of that upright man against him, and no flattery or persuasion could induce him to alter or disguise it. For a time he was permitted to retain this opinion unmolested, and it might have been thought

---

\* The precise time of the commencement of Henry's attachment to Ann Boleyn is not well ascertained; but, three years before her union with him, we have in Nicholas's Privy Purse expences of Henry the Eighth some curious memorandums of presents from the monarch to his future queen. In 1529, of "purple velvet and stuff" for her use. In December of the same year, £180 in money. In April 1530, her servant was paid for finding a hare. And in May, the tailor and skinner were paid for her dresses. Also, bows and arrows were bought for her. In November, twenty yards of crimson satin. In December, eight guineas for badge skins or furs. On the 21st of that month, twenty shillings in silver. The next day, linen cloth for her shirts, and also five pounds. On the 23rd, five pounds more. On the 30th, one hundred pounds as a new year's gift, &c.



that the storm was overpast, for higher dignities yet awaited Sir Thomas.

Wolsey, the first favourite, the long beloved of his sovereign, having at length fallen into deep disgrace, the vacant office of Chancellor was, in October 1529, conferred upon More. To enhance the favour, the Duke of Norfolk, by the king's command, delivered an oration at his installation, stating the high value in which his majesty held Sir Thomas More; in proof of which he had singled him out, although a layman, to fill an office which hitherto had been chiefly conferred on singular learned prelates, or men of the greatest nobility. "But," he adds, "what is wanting in these respects, the admirable virtues, the matchless gifts of wit and wisdom, of this man, doth most fully recompense the same." \*

It could not have been without sor-

---

\* Roper.

rowful anticipations that this dignity was accepted. *Privately*, More had already signified his dissent from Henry upon a point which touched the monarch's passions; *publicly*, he knew he must soon oppose him: and who can wonder if, with the knowledge of Wolsey's recent degradation, the new Chancellor felt certain in his own mind that his chance of escape was small. Yet there was a possibility that by withdrawing from affairs of state, and devoting himself chiefly to the duties of a lawyer, he might steer his course with usefulness and safety.

The chief minister was not then looked upon as responsible for the acts of the government: the king was the active moving spring of the whole machinery, and the business of the minister was chiefly to execute his orders. Power, therefore, was a mere result of capricious favouritism; and when a disgraced minister was prosecuted before parliament for any obnoxious

measure of his administration, it was well known to be a mere act of royal vengeance against a person who had once stood high in courtly favour, but was now under its displeasure.

In directing his attention chiefly to his *legal* duties, Sir Thomas More found the state of chancery such as to require much amendment. One cannot but fancy him sometimes in thought recurring in these days of elevation to his favourite Utopians:—

“They have but few laws, and such is their constitution, that they need not many. They very much condemn other nations, whose laws, together with the commentaries upon them, swell up to so many volumes; for they think it an unreasonable thing to oblige men to obey a body of laws that are both of such a bulk and so dark as not to be read and understood by every one of the subjects. They have no lawyers among them, for they consider them as a sort of people whose profession it is to disguise matters, and to wrest the laws; and therefore they think it is much better that every man

should plead his own cause, and trust it to the judge; as, in other places, the client trusts it to a counsellor. By this means they both cut off many delays, and find out truth more certainly."

The predecessor of More had not indeed failed either in ability or in personal integrity; but his love of pomp had led him to surround himself with a large train of avaricious followers: and though the Cardinal might disdain a bribe, few could obtain access to him without bribing his attendants. More, on the contrary, simple and plain in his habits, took effectual measures for keeping open the doors of his court to suitors of every rank; and, not content with this, used to sit every afternoon in his open hall, "where every one who had any suit to prefer was allowed to come without any form or writing whatever, and explain his cause in person." \*

---

\* Macdiarmid.

It is an affecting thing to know that the course of justice was at the same time administered, under the same roof, by a father and son so eminent both for integrity and ability. Sir John More, now near ninety years of age, sat in the court of King's-Bench; while his son, the Lord Chancellor, regularly went every day into that court to ask his father's blessing upon his knees, before he took his own higher station! When on any public occasion they happened to meet, More always offered the precedence to his father, who as constantly declined the honour, in favour of his son's higher dignity in the state. Happily, he did not live to see him whose rising fortunes and merit had gladdened his heart, fall a victim to the fickleness of a tyrant.

Such was More's industry in his new office, that he rapidly cleared away the arrears of his predecessors. Some of the suits had been there near twenty years,

and a vast accumulation remained; yet More had only held the office two years, when, on determining one cause, and calling for another to be heard, he was told there was not one more depending: a circumstance which he caused to be entered on record, and which gave rise to the following epigram:—

“ When More had some time Chancellor been,  
No more suits did remain :  
The same shall never more be seen,  
Till More be there again.” \*

Inflexibly just in all his views, no feeling of affection for his relations and friends was permitted to interfere with his calm and dispassionate decrees. So habituated were the suitors of that time to purchase, at any rate indirectly, favour for themselves, that even his own sons-in-law complained that it was impossible to make any profit of him; and that there would have

---

\* Erasmus.—Butler's Life.

been more chance for their obtaining a favourable decision in Wolsey's time than in his. It is also mentioned, that one of them, trusting to his partiality, preferred putting his matter into chancery, to having it decided by arbitration; but soon found, to his great chagrin, that the Chancellor had given judgment directly against him. "This one thing, I assure thee," said the upright judge, "that if the parties will call for justice at my hands, then, though it were my father, whom I love so dearly, stood on one side; and the devil, whom I hate extremely, stood on the other; his cause being just, the devil of me should have his due. For your sake, my children, I will do justice to all men, and leave you a blessing."

More's great grandson has, in his quaint manner, related an amusing anecdote of the Chancellor's passing judgment against his wife.—"It happened," says he, "on a time, that a beggar's little dog, which she

had lost, was presented for a jewel to my Lady More, and she had kept it some sen-  
night very carefully: but at last the beggar  
had notice where her dog was, and pre-  
sently she came to complain to Sir Thomas,  
as he was sitting in his hall, that my Lady  
withheld her dog from her. Presently my  
Lady was sent for, and the dog brought  
with her; which Sir Thomas taking in his  
hands, caused his wife, because she was  
the worthier person, to stand at the upper  
end of the hall, and the beggar at the  
nether end, and said, that he sat there to  
do every one justice: he bade each of them  
call the dog; which, when they did, the  
dog went presently to the beggar, forsaking  
my Lady. When he saw this, he bade my  
Lady be contented, for it was none of hers:  
yet she repining at the sentence of my  
Lord Chancellor, agreed with the beggar,  
and gave her a piece of gold which would  
well have bought three dogs; and so all  
parties were agreed: every one smiling



to see his manner of finding out the truth." \*

About this time his father died. By his death More's income met with very trifling increase; for his mother-in-law surviving him ten years, the family estate was enjoyed by her. He, himself, rated the greatest amount of his landed property, derived from inheritance, marriage, or by purchase, at about fifty pounds a year.† His private practice as a lawyer we have seen had been extensive and lucrative; but now he enjoyed no more than the bare salary of his office: and his hospitable style of living, his extreme liberality, and the patronage he bestowed upon literature and the arts, rendered it impossible for him to lay by any portion of his income. We shall therefore see him, when resigning his high office, retiring, not like many other minis-

---

\* More.—Great Grandson's Life.

† More—page 171.

ters, rich with its spoils, but literally poorer than when he entered upon it.

Having often adverted to his love of the fine arts, it is right in this place to mention the manner in which he employed the high influence he now possessed in promoting their progress in England. His friend Erasmus having sent over from Switzerland the celebrated painter Holbein, with a picture of himself, painted by this eminent artist, More seized the opportunity of making the king acquainted with his merits; in order to which, having caused the artist to execute some beautiful portraits, he hung them up in his great hall, disposed to the best advantage, and invited Henry to an entertainment. Struck with the beauty of the pictures, the king eagerly asked if the artist were alive, and, if so, whether he were to be had for any money. More immediately introduced Holbein to him; and the consequence was not only royal patronage to the painter, but the

fullest employment from Englishmen of wealth and eminence.

Soon after More's accession to office, the king again brought before him the question of his divorce.\* It is highly probable, that, in spite of all his experience of More's disinterestedness, Henry never contemplated the possibility of his resisting the influence of kindness, and of that show of magnanimity contained in his present of the highest dignity he had to bestow, the Chancellorship. He might fancy that gratitude and affection would prevail, where he well knew threats and bribes would have been tried in vain; but More, on his knees, besought the king to forgive him for looking first to God, then to him: assuring him it was a grief to his heart that he was not able to find any way in which, with integrity of conscience, he could serve his grace on that account.

---

\* Roper's Life—page 28.

In any other man such resolution would have been unpardonable; but Henry, whatever might be his regret and vexation, never avowed that this was considered by him as a just cause of resentment: and, even when More finally tendered his resignation, parted with him with expressions of esteem and regret.

The grand point, however, which occasioned the desertion of the minister was, it cannot be doubted, disinclination to engage with the monarch in those attacks which, he plainly perceived, were about to be made upon the established religion. It was not to be expected that an honest believer, like More, could look forward with much confidence to the result of a reformation, of which Henry the Eighth was to be the champion. Mistaken conscience might lead him to estimate too highly the degree of spiritual allegiance due to the Pope; though he by no means went the length of many catholics of that

period. He affirms, on the contrary, that "there are orders in Christ's church by which a Pope may be admonished and amended, and hath been for incorrigible mind and lack of amendment deposed and changed—" \* a conclusion which Wickliff maintained, and which was condemned by the Council of Constance. But, however that might be, the claim of his *sovereign* to be his spiritual head was another, and quite a distinct question: one which will probably be decided by a large portion of the Christian community exactly as More, in fact, did decide it. He was about to be required, not merely to withdraw his fealty from one claimant, but to bestow it on another: to give it to one whom, personally, he could not respect, and who was merely throwing off the religious yoke, in revenge and exasperation for the delays interposed between himself and the object

---

\* See Roper's Life,—Singer's Edition,—Lewis's Preface.

of an unlawful passion. Besides, More knew that Henry was no protestant: he had written warmly against Luther, and believed in the Real Presence; and *his* reformation was not of that honest kind which could claim from a man like the Chancellor attention or respect. It was altogether worldly: not one spark of generous enthusiasm could be caught from it; virtue had no hand in it; and morality, at least Henry's morality, was against it. If More, then, was not a reformer, let not the inference be hastily drawn, that, in other times, and under circumstances less painful to his better feelings, he would not have been so. Like Erasmus, he saw the corruptions of the clergy, and had, in his calm and private meditations, gone much beyond the spirit of the times in his ideas of religious liberty.

The following passage in *Utopia* will shew his freedom of speculation in matters of church government.—

“ Their priests are men of eminent piety, and therefore few in number: there are only thirteen in every town, one for every temple. \* \* \* \* \* They are chosen by the people in the same manner as the magistrates, by suffrages, privily given, to prevent faction; and when chosen are consecrated by the college of priests. \* \* \* \* \* They have so few of them, lest numbers sharing in the honour, the dignity of the order so highly esteemed among them might sink in reputation. They also think it difficult to find many of such exalted goodness as to be equal to that dignity, which demands the exercise of more than common virtue.”

When they had received the Christian religion the author also informs us that

“ they disputed among themselves, whether one chosen by them to be a priest would not thereby be qualified to perform every office of one, though *he derived no authority from the Pope.*”\*

But he now suffered an unhappy experience to inculcate its lessons, uncorrected by those of hope. He was probably suspicious, and with some justice, of the

---

\* Cayley.—Vol. 2, 125.

reformers; for, while he knew their opinions, he saw that some of them were eagerly sought by Henry as assistants in freeing him from his worldly difficulties: and he believed that in overturning papal supremacy, the people would be no gainers in religion or morals. It is probable, that no want of mere courage, but a want of ability to extend his views, and take a comprehensive glance at what the Christian church might gain from a renovation of her administration, put in competition with the certainty of trouble which he foresaw, closed up the avenues of his mind, at this time, completely against all that could be said or written in favour of a reformation.

He seems, like Burke at the French Revolution, to have been perfectly panic-struck. Men of strong, clear vision may mock at this: but is there not much to command our sympathy in the emotion with which very susceptible and moral minds contemplate a temporary demolition



of the order of society, more especially when it is against the religious part of the government that the attack is chiefly directed?

What has been well said of civil wars may certainly with no less justice be applied to the first outbreak of religious dissensions—that

“There never yet was an instance in which either side had a clear case of unqualified right against a clear case of unmitigated wrong. It is the wisely moderate and scrupulously good who have usually the greatest difficulty in deciding for themselves. It is they, therefore, who have the greatest risks to run of differing from each other in their decisions. And, if this were remembered in reviewing the conduct of men and parties in different times, there would be more of charity and more truth in the conclusions, both of those who act in public affairs, and those who write about them.”\*

Unsupported by a strong trust in the declarations of Revelation, we know not how

---

\* Lord Nugent's Memorials of Hampden.

a truly conscientious man could eagerly plunge into such a warfare, and More had certainly never attained the faith of those who firmly maintained, on apostolic ground, the degeneracy and antisciptural character of the Church.—If persecution ever *did* number him among her sons, it was at this period : but we will venture to say, that the more carefully the evidence respecting the facts stated against him is examined, the more difficult it will be to believe him guilty to the extent recorded.—In his “Apology” he admits having “examined” by the infliction of punishment some who were brought before him, but expressly states that this was for “robbery, murder, or robbery of churches”—not for heresy. In two cases only of the latter, did he use punishment: and one of these was towards a servant of his own household, who had endeavoured to teach a child of the family some Lutheran opinion, and whom More, as a master, more than as a magistrate, would,

according to the customs of those times, conceive he had a right to chastise; the other he alleges was a similar chastisement of a person, for flagrant and indecent interruption of public worship.

That, in all these cases, the heresy of the offenders was a heinous aggravation of guilt in More's eyes, there can be no doubt, for, after speaking of the "thieves, murderers, and robbers of churches," he adds, "*notwithstanding that heretics be much worse than all those, yet, saving only their sure keeping, I never did else cause any such thing to be done to them.*" In conclusion, he says, "And of all that ever came into my hand for heresy, as help me God, saving, as I said, the sure keeping of them, else had never any of them, any strype or stroke given them, so much as a fillip on the forehead."\* It is difficult to doubt the word of such a man as More, when thus solemnly

---

\* More's Apology—chapter 36.

asserting his innocence of the worst of the charges brought against him, and we have the further distinct testimony of Erasmus, who says, "He hated the seditious tenets, by which the world was then miserably disturbed; but it is a sufficient argument of his moderation that, while he was Chancellor, no person was put to death for his disproved opinions." Nor must it be forgotten, that all the accusations rest ultimately upon the authority of Fox, who was a boy of fifteen at the time of More's death, and whose *Martyrology* is a book bearing evident traces of party feeling and highly coloured representations.\*

With all the allowance which charity and hope can afford to make, it is too cer-

---

\* Mr. Sharon Turner quotes Strype, in citing the alleged instances of More's cruelty; and says that Strype had them from contemporary *authorities*. Is Mr. Turner, however, able to point out any other authority than that of Mr. Fox? The very words of the latter, somewhat abridged, are quoted by Strype, with reference to Bainham.

tain however that the feelings of More towards those who differed from him were far indeed at this time from the benevolent and enlarged views of his Utopia. Neither were those views perfect; for though King Utopus professed to leave men free to believe as they chose, there were bounds to his toleration—"A solemn and severe law was made against those who could so far degenerate from the dignity of human nature, as to suppose our souls died with our bodies," &c. "They (the Utopians) look upon such men as utterly unfit for human society, or to be citizens of a well-ordered republic. They never raise such to offices or honours; but despise them, as men of base and sordid minds. *Yet they do not punish them.*" The reader will not fail to be struck with the imperfection of the Doctrine of Toleration in the above. Either, according to More's idea, it was *no* punishment to be the object of public contempt, of disgrace and deprivation, or he

is the advocate in this place of punishment for opinions. He does not seem to have perceived that the *principle* of toleration is violated by privation as well as by positive infliction. But it is of importance, to our candid judgments, that we should be perfectly aware how little the real spirit of religious toleration was understood in those days: to Protestant, no less than Catholic, did it seem right and lawful to condemn to death a brother, merely for disbelief in articles of faith. Cranmer was no sooner in possession of power, than he too began to exercise similar cruelties to those afterwards perpetrated against himself and his brother reformers; and several victims are known to have been burnt at the stake for heresy, by his instigation.

However great then our gratitude to those deserving, pious, heroic, but not infallible men, who, under Providence, were the means of rescuing us from the Papal

yoke, and preparing the way for better and clearer light than any *they* could bestow, one grand fact must not be lost sight of—that they had not yet recognised the right of private judgment and fearless avowal of religious opinions, and that the Papal persecutors were not alone in their misdeeds, since, under the Protestant government of Queen Elizabeth, no fewer than one hundred and eighty persons suffered death, by the laws against Catholic priests and converts.

The bigotry of More was at least sincere and disinterested. Walking one day with his son-in-law, Roper, by the river at Chelsea, he suddenly, pointing to the water, said, earnestly, that on condition three things were well accomplished, he would to God he were presently thrown into the Thames. Roper, surprised, requested to know what were these three great objects. “The first,” said More, “is, that whereas the greatest part of Christian princes are

now at mortal war, they were at universal peace;\* the second, that whereas the Church of Christ is at this time grievously afflicted with many errors and heresies, it were settled in a perfect uniformity of religion; the third is, that whereas the king's marriage is now brought in question, it were to the glory of God, and the satisfaction of all parties, well concluded."†

---

\* More was a sincere lover of peace. His Utopians are but setters forth of his own feelings on this subject. "They detest war as a very brutal thing: and which, to the reproach of human nature, is more practised by men than by any sort of beasts; they, in opposition to the sentiments of almost all other nations, think that there is nothing more inglorious than that glory which is gained by war: and, therefore, though they accustom themselves daily to military exercises, and the discipline of war, in which, not only their men, but their women, likewise, are trained up, that, in cases of necessity, they may not be quite useless, yet they do not rashly engage in war, unless it be either to defend themselves or their friends from any unjust aggressors, or, out of good-nature or in compassion, assist a depressed nation in shaking off the yoke of tyranny. They, indeed help their friends, not only in defensive, but also in offensive war: but they never do that unless they had been consulted before the breach was made, and, being satisfied with the grounds on which they went, &c."—Burnet's *Utopia*—page 153—4.

† Roper—page 14.



The clergy, considering themselves and the church at large greatly indebted to him for his religious treatises, and well knowing that he had not derived much store of worldly wealth from his office, resolved, in convocation, to present him with a gift of four or five thousand pounds; a sum equal to about thirty or forty thousand in our times. Three bishops, among whom was his special friend Tonsal, Bishop of Durham, were appointed to wait upon him in the name of the rest, and request his acceptance of this mark of gratitude. More gratefully thanked them, but refused their present; declaring that he would accept of no reward for his religious writings but at the hand of God. Nor would he permit them to offer the present to his family. "So much," said he, "do I value my pleasure above my profit, that I would not, for a much larger sum, have lost the rest of so many nights as were spent upon those writings. Yet, notwithstanding, upon

condition that all heresies were suppressed, I would that all my books were burnt, and my labour entirely lost.” \*

After having held the Great Seal about two years and a half, More became more and more solicitous to prevail on the king to accept of his resignation. In this he was finally gratified; and, on the 16th of May, 1532, Henry permitted him to retire: yet, notwithstanding his expressions of esteem, we hear of no provision for the supply of his minister's future wants, and these More was soon obliged (notwithstanding his uncomplaining temper) to own were neither few nor small.

The manner in which he announced his resignation to his lady was highly characteristic. He had given up the Seals on the preceding evening, and, in the morning, it being a holiday, he accompanied his family to Chelsea church. The custom of the

---

\* Roper—page 26.

time was, that, after mass was over, one of my Lord's gentlemen should go to my Lady's pew, and tell her my Lord was gone before: on this occasion, More himself performed his servant's usual part, and, with cap in hand, announced that my Lord was gone; which, though at first considered but as one of his wonted jests, was soon found to be a serious truth, and one which cost him no little reproach from the lady.

"Shortly after," says his great grandson, "he called together all his servants, many of whom were gentlemen of good sort and fashion, and told them that he could not maintain them as he gladly would; and, therefore, demanded of them what course of life they would betake themselves to; and if they purposed to serve any nobleman, he would undertake to place them to their contentment,—who, with eyes full of tears, affirmed, that they had rather serve him for nothing, than most men for a great stipend; but when to this he would not

agree, he settled them all in places most fit for their turns, either with bishops or noblemen.”\*

Most of the appendages to his late exalted station he might have parted with, without any loss of happiness; but there was another necessary measure to come, and this must have cost him very dear. His children and grandchildren, now a numerous band, had, up to this time, been partakers of his fortunes; and such was their strong mutual attachment, that before they could resolve finally to separate, every expedient was thought of, every plan for economical arrangement canvassed; while their father looked about him at their sad and thoughtful faces, and tried to enliven the debate with his wonted cheerfulness. “Then will I,” said he, “shew unto you *my* mind: I have been brought up at Oxford, at an Inn of

---

\* More—page 188.

Chancery, at Lincoln's Inn, and in the King's Court, from the lowest degree to the highest; and yet have I, in yearly revenues at this present, little left me above a hundred pounds by the year: so that now, if we look to live together, we must be content to be contributors together. But my counsel is, that we fall not to the lowest fare first: we will not, therefore, descend to Oxford fare, nor to the fare of New Inn; but we will begin with Lincoln's Inn diet, where many right worshipful men of good account and good years do live full well: which, if we find ourselves after the first year not able to maintain, then will we the next year come down to Oxford fare, where many great, learned, and ancient fathers and doctors are continually conversant: which, if our purses stretch not to maintain neither, then, may we after, with bag and wallet, go a begging together, hoping that for pity some good folks will give us their charity, and

at every man's door to sing a *Salve Regina*; whereby we shall still keep company and be merry together."\*

But it was soon found, that no management could avert this misfortune; and all his children left him, with the exception of his favourite daughter, Margaret Roper, who, with her husband, occupied a house next to his own.

The king, resolved to defy other difficulties, gave notice, shortly after More's resignation, of his intention publicly to celebrate his marriage with Anna Boleyn. Still, it seems as if his late Chancellor's disapprobation weighed upon his mind; and his displeasure must have been exasperated by More's refusal to attend the coronation of the new queen. On this occasion, an express invitation had been sent him by three of the bishops to attend them to the ceremony, and the letter was

---

\* More—page 189.

accompanied by a present of twenty pounds to buy him a gown. The present More accepted, but he declined the invitation; and his letter contains a shrewd caution to the bishops against concession to the measures of the court.

More now seems to have occupied himself chiefly in preparation for whatever tyranny and caprice might choose to inflict upon him. He erected a monument for himself in Chelsea church, drew up the inscription, and then devoted his attention in a great measure to the composition of religious works, in which it is a matter of grief to find violent and repeated attacks upon the heretics.

It appears to have been about eight or nine years before More's resignation, that Elizabeth Barton, the Maid of Kent, a fanatic nun, had been encouraged by some weak or designing people to feign revelations from heaven, on the subject of the royal divorce. At first the messages were

vague and general; but, when she proceeded so far as to predict that if Henry divorced Catharine, and married another, he would not be king a month longer, and when it was found that she was in actual correspondence with persons of note, the affair was considered as of some importance, and as indicating a conspiracy among some of the pretended believers.

In the examinations which followed, Fisher, Bishop of Rochester, and Sir Thomas More, were named as among those who had, in some indirect manner, committed themselves by private communications of a treasonable nature with this enthusiast. More allowed that he had visited her; and, thinking her to be a pious woman, had desired her prayers: adding, that he had written to caution her against meddling with affairs of state, and a copy of this letter he sent to Cromwell.

Fisher appears to have been more impressed in favour of the pretended Reve-



lations; but, with regard to More, however much superstition might have misled him, he indignantly disclaimed all connexion with the parties, when the proofs of their design and duplicity were brought to light. The unfortunate Maid of Kent, probably the victim herself of some more deep deceiver, was, together with five of her associates, executed; and More and Fisher might have been forgiven, had they been capable of atoning for mere imputed guilt, by actual perjury. But though, for the present, the earnest entreaties of More's friends prevailed, and the king openly agreed to the opinion pronounced by his council on the subject of his innocence, the struggle between the monarch and his servant had gone too far to leave much probability of future peace.

During the next session of parliament, (1534,) an act was passed, declaring the king's former marriage unlawful, ratifying his present union, and fixing the inheritance

of the crown, first in Anna Boleyn's issue, and next in the king's legal heirs. The same act commanded an oath to be taken in support of its provisions, under the penalty of misprision of treason. The first layman summoned to take this oath was Sir Thomas More. He went to the sitting of the council at Lambeth, with a full persuasion that the hour of his chief trial was now rapidly drawing near; yet, with a composure and cheerfulness which shewed that religion had done her work in preparing him for that hour. "I thank our Lord, the field is won," was his triumphant expression to his son-in-law, Roper, as he took his seat in the barge which was to convey him to Lambeth.

He declared before the council, that he had no objection to swear to the proposed succession of Queen Anna's children to the throne,—for this he thought was a matter incumbent on parliament to regulate,—but he *did* object to the declaration of the ille-

gality of the king's former marriage. Cranmer would fain have so framed the oath as to accommodate his conscience, but this was overruled, and More was, accordingly, committed to the Tower under the penalties appended to the act. Fisher likewise underwent the same confinement.

For a time it was most rigorous. Towards Fisher, indeed, no relenting seems to have been shewn; but More was at length permitted to see again *that* member of his family to whom his heart clave with more especial fondness. His daughter, Margaret Roper, whose accomplishments and talents had been the pride of his prosperous days, was now his greatest comfort. With a feeling well worthy the child of More, she had thus written to him:—

“ MINE OWN GOOD FATHER !

“ It is to me no little comfort, since I cannot talk with you by such means as I *would*, at the least way to delight myself, in this bitter time of your absence, by such means as I *may*, by as often writing to you as shall be expedient, and by read-

ing again and again your most fruitful and delectable letter; the faithful messenger of your very virtuous and greatly spiritual mind, rid from all corrupt love of worldly things, and fast knit only in the love of God and desire of heaven, as becometh a very true worshipper and faithful servant of God; who, I doubt not, good father, holdeth His holy hand over you, and shall (as He hath) preserve you both in body and soul, *ut sit meas sana in corpore sano*; and namely now, when you have abjected all earthly consolations, and resigned yourself willingly, gladly, and fully, for His love, to His holy protection.

“ Father, what think you hath been our comfort since your departing from us? Surely, the experience we have had of your life past, your godly conversation, and wholesome counsel, and virtuous example, and a surety, not only of the continuance of that same, but also a great increase, by the goodness of our Lord, to the great rest and gladness of your heart, devoid of all earthly dregs, and garnished with the noble vesture of heavenly virtues—a pleasant place for the Holy Spirit of God to rest in. Who defend you (as, I doubt not, good father, of His goodness he will) from all trouble of mind or body, and give me, your most loving, obedient daughter and handmaid, and all of us your children and friends, to follow *that* which we praise in you,

and, to our only comfort, remember and commune together of you, that we may, in conclusion, meet with you, mine own dear father, in the bliss of heaven, to which our most merciful Lord hath brought us with His precious blood!

“ Your own most loving,

“ Obedient daughter and kinswoman,

“ MARGARET ROPER,  
who desireth, above all worldly things, to be in John a Wood's stead, to do you some service. But we live in hope that we shall shortly receive you again. I pray God heartily we may, if it be his holy will.”\*

Yet even this excellent woman forms no exception to the remark, that there was not one of his family who appears to have estimated his resistance as it deserved: on the contrary, she urged him to take the oath,† by many considerations, and, among others, by that unworthy one, the apprehension of death. Her father calmed her spirits, and

\* Extracted from More's English works.

† She is said to have taken it herself, with this exception, “ as far as it would stand with the law of God.”—Jortin's Erasmus, vol. i. 175.

endeavoured to raise her to a higher sense of what duty required. If there be, in his discourses at this time, some traces of a zeal which does not seem to us "according to knowledge," it is impossible not to admire the mingled humility and firmness of his whole demeanour. He employed himself chiefly in religious exercises, and also in writing (with a coal, for the most part, for his enemies denied him pen and ink) his work on *Comfort in Tribulation*.\*

Some time after his interview with Mrs. Roper, his wife was allowed to visit him in the Tower. Her rough and unsympathizing address to him, with More's answer, is thus given by his great grandson:—

"What the good year, Mr. More," said she, "I marvel that you, who have hitherto always been taken for a wise man, will now so play the fool, as to lie here in this

---

\* For a specimen of his beautiful prayers, see Appendix.

close filthy prison, and be content to lie shut up thus with mice and rats, when you might be abroad and at your liberty, with the favour and good will both of the king and the council, if you would but do as all the bishops and best learned of the realm have done; and seeing you have at Chelsea a right fair house, your library, your books, your gallery, your garden, and all other necessities, so handsome about you, where you might, in company with me, and your children, and household, be merry, I muse what a God's name you mean here still thus fondly to tarry." After he had a good while heard her, he said unto her, with a cheerful countenance, "I pray thee, good Mrs. Alice, tell me one thing, Is not this house as near heaven as mine own? I see no great cause why I should much joy either of my fair house, or any thing belonging thereto, when, if I should be but seven years buried under the ground, and should rise and come thither again, I should

not fail to find some therein that would bid me get out of doors, and tell me plainly, that it were none of mine: what cause have I then to like such an house, as would so soon forget its master? And how uncertain," continued he, " would be my hold of such enjoyments!"

A letter from More's wife to Secretary Cromwell, written about this period, offers a more affecting picture of the actual state of distress to which she and her family were reduced. She speaks of " my great and extreme necessity, which, over and above the charge of mine own house, do pay weekly fifteen shillings for the board wages of my poor husband and his servant, for the maintaining whereof, I have been compelled, of very necessity, to sell part of mine apparel, for lack of other substance to make money of." Soon after this, the Secretary visited More in the Tower, and endeavoured to persuade him to a compliance, but in vain. On his leaving the pri-



son, More wrote with a coal the following lines :—

“ Ey, flattering fortune, loke thou near so fayre,  
Or near so plesantly begin to smile,  
As though thou wouldst my ruine all repayre,  
During my life thou shalt not me beguile,  
Trust shall I God to entre in awhile  
His haven of heaven, sure and uniforme,  
Ever after thy calme expect I storme.”

One of his shorter letters to Mrs. Roper, written in the same manner, may be taken as a specimen of the still cheerful tone of his mind :—

“ MINE OWN GOOD DAUGHTER,

“ Our Lord be thanked, I am in good health of body, and in good quiet of mind ; and of worldly things I no more desire than I have. I beseech Him make you all happy with the hope of heaven. And such things as I sometimes longed to talk with you all, concerning the world to come, our Lord put them into your heart, as I trust he doth, and better too, by his Holy Spirit—who bless and preserve you all. Written *with a coal*, by your tender and loving father, who in his poor prayers forgetteth none of you all, nor your babes, nor your nurses, nor your good husbands, nor your good husband’s shrewd wives, nor your father’s shrewd wife either, nor our other

friends. And thus fare ye heartily well for lack of paper.

“ THOMAS MORE, Knight.”\*

In the mean time, the king's quarrel with the see of Rome assumed daily a more serious appearance. That great event, which was to sever this country from its connexions with the Papal power, was now about to take place. It was a period to which the eye of a Protestant must ever turn with gratitude towards Him who, out of the evil passions and tyrannical designs of one selfish man, brings a blessing on thousands of his creatures. Yet we cannot regard the beginnings of the Reformation in this country, as very promising, far less, as pure. The transfer of power which then took place, could not, as far as the individual to whom it was allotted was concerned, be considered as an improvement, and a royal pope was in himself no better than an episcopal one, excepting

---

\* Appendix to Roper's Life.

as his political connexion with the country protected it from the liability of foreign interference.

It appears that Sir Thomas More's ideas of the degree of obedience in temporal matters conscientiously due to the Romish see, were very moderate during the greater part of his life; and though, in the absence of full evidence, it would be unjustifiable to pronounce upon his later opinions, there can scarcely be a doubt that he considered the liberties of the people abridged by the contemplated measure. He hated tyranny, and he believed the government of the Church to be more merciful and more safe than the dominion of Henry. It is also certain, that he was so far from wishing that the pope should interfere with the temporal jurisdiction of affairs in this country, that he gave his support to the statute of *premunire*, which destroyed undue influence over English ecclesiastics.\*

---

\* Burnet—vol. i. p. 120, edit. 1718.

By one act of parliament, Henry had declared himself head of the Church: to this act the penalty of treason was not appended: but it was followed by another, rendering it high treason to deny, by word or writing, this, or any other of his titles. Fisher, still a prisoner in the Tower, was selected and called upon to express his submission to the new arrangements. Steadily refusing, he was condemned to death and executed. This venerable prelate was far advanced in years, the last survivor of the counsellors of Henry VII. To his care the Countess of Richmond had, on her death-bed, committed her royal grandson; and Henry, for many years, had revered him as a parent, and was accustomed to boast, that no prince in Europe possessed a prelate equal in virtue or learning to Fisher. His fate was, probably, hastened by Henry's having received intimation of the pope's intention to send him a cardinal's hat. "Paul may send it

to him," said he, "but I will take care that he have never a head to wear it." It is true that other pretexts were used, both in his case and that of More, to fasten guilt upon the victims, but nothing was substantiated, and the utmost that could ever be laid to their charge, was inflexible adherence to what they deemed a religious obligation.

Great pains were taken to overcome the resistance of Sir Thomas More. First, a committee of the privy council waited upon him, and endeavoured to procure his acquiescence, but all in vain: he only said, "the act was a two-edged sword: if he answered one way, it would destroy his body; if another, it would ruin his soul."

At length, after a year's imprisonment, he was brought to trial. The rigour of his confinement had so far weakened him, that he came into court leaning on his staff; but his countenance was cheerful and constant. The endeavours of his adversaries

long failed to draw from him a single syllable condemning the new law. "He wished not to judge for others; he only prayed for himself, on conscientious grounds, that he might be permitted not to take the required oath. All treason he disclaimed: he solemnly declared he had never spoken against the law to living man: he had given over thinking of popes or princes, although all the world should be given him, being fully determined to serve God alone."

Afterwards, when the jury had found him guilty, and sentence to die a traitor's death was pronounced upon him, he said, "Well, seeing I am condemned, God knows how justly, I will freely speak, to the disburthening of my conscience, what I think of this law. When I perceived that the king's pleasure was to sift out from whence the pope's authority was derived, I confess I studied seven years together to find out the truth itself; and I could not

read in any one doctor's writings where the Church alloweth any one saying that avoucheth that a layman was, or ever could be, the head of the Church."

The chancellor reproved him, for pretending to greater wisdom than all the bishops of the realm. "Against one bishop on your side," answered More, "I am able to produce one hundred; and against one realm, the consent of all Christendom for more than a thousand years."

"Now, Sir Thomas," said the Duke of Norfolk, "you shew an obstinate and malicious mind."

"Noble Sir," answered More, "not any malice nor obstinacy causeth me to say this, but the just necessity of the case constraineth me for the discharge of my conscience; and I call God to witness, no other than this hath moved me hereunto."

After this, the judges having enquired if he had any more to say, he answered, "Nothing, my Lords, but that I verily trust and

heartily pray, that, though your Lordships have been my judges on earth to condemnation, we may hereafter meet joyfully in heaven together, to our everlasting salvation; and God preserve you all, especially my lord the king, and grant him faithful counsellors!"\*

But the bitterness of death was to come. Before the face of his judges, and in the solitude of his cell, More had been calm, cheerful, and even triumphant; but now, on leaving the court, he had to pass along in the usual state of a condemned prisoner, and there was one waiting to meet him, whose spirit could ill bear to see the friend, the master, the blameless and almost adored father, reduced to such unforeseen ignominy. His daughter, Mrs. Roper, had stationed herself at the Tower Wharf, to catch a glimpse of him as he returned, perhaps rather to testify her

---

\* More's Life, by C. More, p. 259—60.



affectionate feelings towards him, than from absolute expectation of the result of the trial: but when she saw the axe carried before him, with the edge towards him, (the certain sign of what was to follow,) she forced her way through the surrounding guards, hung on his neck, kissed him, and repeatedly sobbed out, "My father! O, my father!" Still More was calm; and, giving her his last blessing, reminded her that she knew the depths of his heart, that it was resigned to God's will, and prayed her to be content and patient.

They parted then: but scarcely had she quitted his side, than, again overcome with anguish, she burst through the crowd a second time, embracing him, and giving way to the most passionate bursts of sorrow, in which she was joined by the orphan whom More's bounty had adopted, and who loved him as a father. Human nature could not withstand these proofs

of affection, and More wept, though in silence ; nor were there many present who could restrain their tears. History has recorded few things so affecting as this last interview between More and his daughter. As we read, and remember the blameless, and even lofty, character of their domestic life, the school, the playful and unreserved intercourse of the father and his children, their severer studies, their religious exercises, the truly moral feeling which seems to have regulated the employments of every hour, the charity to others, and the perfect union among themselves ; we feel that the monarch who could remove from his people such an exhibition of pure domestic virtue and happiness, must have been utterly insensible to its value ; must at least have learned to stifle in his own bosom the approbation of right, and taken counsel with things impure, and hostile to the love of excellence.

Sir Thomas saw his daughter no more :

but the day before his execution he once again wrote to her. This last letter, written with a coal, is short, and contains his last injunctions and blessings to all his children. He reverts to their last interview, and thanks her for all her affection. Early on the morrow, July 6th, 1535, Sir Thomas Pope came to tell him it was the king's pleasure he should die that morning by nine o'clock, and that he furthermore required of him not to address the people at his execution in many words. More received the message with cheerfulness, and prepared to obey, only requesting that the king would allow his daughter Roper to attend at his burial; which he was informed had already been agreed to. Pope then took his leave with many tears.

“ Quiet yourself, good Mr. Pope,” said More, “ and be not discomfited; for I trust we shall once again in heaven see each other full merrily, where we shall be

sure to live and love together in joyful bliss eternally."

He now prepared for execution. The Lieutenant of the Tower perceiving his intention of dressing himself in his best clothes, remonstrated with him, observing that they were too good for the executioner. To this More did not agree: but he complied with the Lieutenant's wish, taking care to send the executioner instead an angel of gold.

In almost any other man, his behaviour on the scaffold would have argued some lightness or insensibility: but it was perfectly in character with More. He was habitually cheerful in the view of death; and the entire honesty of his disposition forbade him to exercise the least constraint over his feelings. All his letters shew that he rather wished for release from a troubled scene. His intercourse with heaven he believed would be only suspended for a moment, and he saw and felt nothing

which could alter the constitutional and confirmed feelings of happiness, which scarcely ever through life seem to have deserted him. Accordingly, he spoke cheerfully, even jocosely, to the executioner; and, when he laid his head upon the block, begged him to stay till he had removed his beard;—"for *that* has committed no treason."

His head remained for some time fixed on a pole on London Bridge, till his daughter Margaret obtained its removal—an act for which she was summoned before the Privy Council, and obliged to undergo a short imprisonment. The body was buried in the chapel of St. Peter, in the Tower; from whence it has been asserted, but apparently without authority, that it was removed to Chelsea church. The head, however, was preserved by Mrs. Roper in a leaden box, and interred with her, on her own decease, in the Roper-vault, adjoining St. Dunstan's, Can-

terbury. The family-house at Chelsea became the property of a court favourite; and Sir Thomas's widow received for her future maintenance only a poor pension of twenty pounds a year.

Thus died, at the age of fifty-six, Sir Thomas More. It was not by the busiest actors of that troubled time that his loss was fully appreciated. It was to those whose spirits were tired with the conflict, and sickened with the prospect of further disturbance,—who were disgusted with the mixture of motives in the best, and the fierce passions and mean artifices of the worst of party-men,—that the thought of such a man never failed to bring repose and peace.

“More is dead!—More, whose breast was purer than snow, and whose genius was excellent above all his nation,”\* said Erasmus, who loved him as a brother, and

---

\* Epistle Dedicatory to the Ecclesiastes.

admired him as a man. "His goodness," says he elsewhere, "has so engraven him in men's hearts, that all lament his death, as he were father or brother. I have seen tears flow from eyes that never saw him—from those who never received benefits from him—yea, while I write these things, tears gush from my own eyes against my will."\*

Glancing down the page of English History, we meet with more shrewd statesmen; with politicians more serviceable to their country: but, for purity and singleness of heart,—for mild domestic wisdom,—for incorruptible integrity in the discharge of the duties of a profession,—for love of learning and the liberal arts,—and for the decisive encouragement, by precept and example, of a mode of life alike dignified and cheerful,—we know not that Biography presents before us, in all

---

\* Stapleton—cap. 21, p. 365.

**its pages, a fairer character than that of  
Sir Thomas More.**



## APPENDIX.

---

### No. I.

#### THE WORKS OF MORE ARE,

*A History of the Reigns of Edward V. and Richard III.*

This is a mere fragment; and was originally written in Latin as well as in English. It was strongly attacked, first by Buck, who accuses the author of partiality towards the reigning faction, and of most unjust abuse of Richard III. The same opinion has been upheld by Walpole in his *Historic Doubts*. He allows More's composition to be a most beautiful one; but supposes he wrote the tract, as he did his *Utopia*, to amuse his leisure and exercise his fancy: and, in fact, the whole piece is so highly dramatic, that it wanted but a little fresh modelling to render it fit for representation.

*Utopia.*

*A Dialogue concerning Heresies and Matters of Religion.*

*The Supplication of Souls.*

*The Confutation of Tindal.*

*A Letter, impugning the erroneous Writing of John Firth against the blessed Sacrament of the Mass.*

*The Apology of Sir Thomas More, Knight, made by him Anno Domini 1533, after that he had given over the Office of Lord Chancellor of England.*

*The Debellation of Salem and Bizance.*

*A Treatise upon the blessed Sacrament of the Altar.*

*A Dialogue of Comfort in Tribulation.*

*A Treatise to receive the blessed Body of our Lord sacramentally and virtuously both.*

*A Treatise upon the Passion of Christ, unfinished.*

*An Exposition of a Part of the Passion of our Saviour Jesus Christ.*

*Certain devout and virtuous Instructions, Meditations, and Prayers, made and collected while he was Prisoner in the Tower.*

*Letters, his Epitaph, &c.*

A collection of Sir T. More's English works was published in London, in a thick folio volume,

in the year 1557, by order of Queen Mary. This is now very scarce. Its contents are as follows—

*Four short things, written in his youth for his pastime.*

*The Life of John Picus, Earl of Merandula.*

*History of Richard III. unfinished.*

*A Treatise (unfinished) upon these words of Scripture, “memorare novissima, et in eternum non peccabis.”*

Three editions of More's Latin works have passed the press. The first printed at Basle, in 8vo. 1563; the second at Louvaine, in folio, in 1566; the last, and best, published by C. Gauset, in folio, at Frankfort and Leipsic, in 1689.

*Lives of Sir Thomas More have been written by the following Individuals.—*

Dr. Thomas Stapleton, in Latin.

By his great-grandson, Thomas More, of which a new edition, with notes and illustrations, has been published by the Rev. Joseph Hunter.

By his son-in-law, Mr. Roper, (edited by Singer.)

By Dr. Warner.

By Mr. Macdiarmid.

And by Mr. Arthur Cayley.

To the above, the editor of the foregoing pages has now to add a memoir in Dr. Lardner's Lives

of British Statesmen, communicated by Sir James Mackintosh.

Sir James Mackintosh observes, with reference to the question of More's religious persecutions, that we cannot equitably consider him as answerable for measures of state, "till the removal of Wolsey, and the delivery of the Great Seal into his hands;" that More's responsibility, "in its most important and only practical part, must be contracted to the short time which extends from the 25th of October, 1529, when he was appointed Chancellor, to May, 1532, when he was removed from his office, not much more than two years and a half." Now it is of this period that Erasmus so decidedly speaks. "It is," says he, "a sufficient proof of his clemency, that, while he was chancellor, no man was put to death for these pestilent dogmas, while so many have suffered capital punishment for them in France, in Germany, and in the Netherlands."

"The charge," continues Sir James, "rests originally on Fox alone, from whom it is copied by Burnet, and, with considerable hesitation, by Strype. But the honest martyrologist writes too inaccurately to be a weighty witness in this case: for he states, that Firth was put to death in June, 1533, and yet imputes it to More, who had resigned his office a year before. In the case of

James Baynham, he only states, that the accused was chained to two posts, for two nights, in More's house, at some not specified time, before his execution."

\* \* \*. "On this slender authority alone, has rested such an imputation on the veracity of the most sincere of men. Whoever reads 'The Apology' will perceive, from the melancholy ingenuousness with which he speaks of this growing unpopularity of his religion in the court and country, that he could not have hoped to escape exposure, if it had been then possible to question his declaration. On the whole, then, More must not only be absolved,—but, when we consider that his administration was formed during a hot paroxysm of persecution; that intolerance was the creed of his age; that he himself, in his days of compliance and ambition, had been drawn over to it as a theory; that he was filled with alarm and horror by the excesses of the heretical insurgents in Germany; we must pronounce him, by his abstinence from any practical share in it, to have given stronger proofs than any other man, of a repugnance to that execrable practice, founded on the unshaken basis of his natural humanity."—*Lives of eminent British Statesmen.*—Page 54—6.

## No. II.

## A PRAYER

MADE BY SIR THOMAS MORE, WHILE HE WAS A  
PRISONER IN THE TOWER.

GIVE me, O Lord! thy grace, in all my fear and agony, to have recourse to that great fear and wonderful agony, which thou, my sweet Saviour! sufferedst on Mount Olivet, before thy most bitter passion; and in the meditation thereof, to conceive such spiritual comfort as shall be profitable to my soul.

Take from me, O my God! all vain-glorious thoughts; all appetite of my own praise; all envy, covetousness, gluttony, sloth, and luxury; all froward affections; all appetite of revenge; all desire of others' harm; all pleasure in provoking any person to anger; all delight of exprobatation and insultation against any in their affliction or calamity. Give me, O Lord! an humble, quiet peaceable, patient, tender, and charitable mind; and in all my thoughts, words, and deeds, to have a taste for thy Holy Spirit.

Give me, O Lord! a lively faith, a firm hope, and a fervent charity; a love of thee incomparably above the love of myself; that I may love nothing to thy displeasure, but every thing in order to thy satisfaction.

Give me, O Lord! a longing to be with thee; not for avoiding the calamities of this wretched world, nor so much for escaping the pains of purgatory, or those of hell, nor for the attaining the joys of heaven, with respect to my own advantage, as purely for the love of thee.

Retain for me, O Lord! thy love and favour, which my love to thee, were it ever so great, could not, without thy infinite goodness, deserve.

Pardon, O Lord! my boldness in making such high petitions, being so vile and sinful a wretch, and so unworthy to obtain the lowest: yet, O Lord! they are such things as I am bound to wish for, and should be near the effectual desire of them, if my manifold sins were not the impediment; for which, O sweet Saviour Christ! vouchsafe, of thy goodness, to wash me, with that blessed blood that issued out of thy tender body in the divers torments of thy most bitter passion.

Take from me, O Lord! this lukewarm, or rather stark cold, manner of meditation, and this dulness in prayer: give me fervour and delight in thinking of thee, and thy grace earnestly to desire

thy holy sacraments; and especially, to rejoice in the presence of thy blessed body, sweet Saviour Christ! in the holy sacrament of the altar, and duly to thank thee for thy gracious visitation therein; and, at that high memorial, with tender compassion to remember and consider thy most bitter death upon the cross.

Make us all, O Lord! every day, virtually participants of that holy sacrament: make us all lively members, sweet Saviour Christ, of thy holy mystical body, the Catholick Church. *Amen.*

Lord! give me patience in tribulation, and grace in every thing, to conform my will to thine; that I may truly say, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

The things, good Lord! that I pray for, give me thy grace to labour for. *Amen.*

---

## A SPIRITUAL GLASS DAILY TO LOOK ON.

BY SIR THOMAS MORE.

Read distinctly, pray devoutly, sigh deeply, suffer patiently, make you lowly, give no sentence hastily, speak but wrath, and that truly; prevent your speech discreetly; do all your deeds in cha-



rity; temptation resist strongly; break his head shortly; weep bitterly; have compassion tenderly; do good works busily; love perseveringly; love heartily; love faithfully; love God all only; and all others for him charitably; love in adversity; love in prosperity; think always of love, for love is none other than God himself; thus to love, bringeth the lover to love without end.

---

The following passages from More's "Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation" are copied verbatim, with no alteration in spelling or style, from a specimen of the original edition in black letter, printed in 1553, in London, by Richard Tottel. By them the reader of the preceding pages will be enabled to judge, in some degree, of More's English style. There are few obsolete words, but the spelling seems to be singularly indecisive, the letters of the same word varying continually.

### PRIDE OF POSSESSION.

"Oh, Cosin Vincent! if the whole worlde were anymated with a reasonable soule, as Plato had went it were, and that it had wytte and understanding to marke and perceive all thing, Lorde

God! howe the grounde on wh<sup>h</sup> a prince buildeth his palace would lowde laugh his lord to scorne, when he sawe hym proude of hys possession, and hearde hym boaste him selfe that he and his bloud are for ever the very Lorde and oweners of that lande. For than woulde the grounde thinke that while in himself, ‘ Ah, thou sely poore soule, that weneste thou were halfe a God, and arte amidde thy glory but a man in a gaye gowne; I, that am the grounde here, over whom thou arte so proude, have had an hundreth such owners of me as thou callest thyselfe, moe than ever thou hast hearde the names of. And some of them that proudly wente over my headde, lye nowe lowe in my belly, and my syde lyeth over them; and many one shall, as thou doest nowe, call hym selfe myne owner after thee, that neyther shal be sybbe to thy bloude, or any worde here of thy name, who ought your castle, Cosin, thre thousande yere a goe.’ ”

---

### SUBMISSION.

“ For grace may we boldly praye, for faith, for hope, and for charitie, and for every such vertue as shall serve us to heavenwarde. But as to all

other thynges before reme'lbred, in wh<sup>h</sup> is containned the matter of every kind of tribulation, we maye never wel make prayers so presysely, but that we must expresse or imploy a condition therein: that is to wytte, that if God see y<sup>e</sup> contrarie better for us, we referre it whole to his wyl; and, instede of our grieve takyng a waye, praye that God maie send us of his goodnes, eyther spiritual co'fort to take it gladly, or stre'gth at the least-waies to beare it patiently. For if we determine wyth our selfe that we wyl take no comforte in nothings, but in the taking of our tribulation fro' us, than eyther prescribe we to God that we wyl he shal no better turne to us though he would, than we wil ourselfe appointe him; or els doe we declare, y<sup>t</sup> what thing is best for us, our selfe can better tel than he. And therefore I saye, lette us in tribulation desyer his comforte and helpe, and lette us remitte the maner of that comforte unto his owne hyghe pleasure: whiche when we doe, lette us nothing doubte, but that lyke as hys hyghe wysdome better seeth what is beste for us, than we can see ourself, so shal his sovereygne goodnes geve us the thing that shal in dede be best. For els, if we wyll presume to stand to our owne choise (except it so be that God offer us the choise him selfe,) as he did to David in the choyse of his owne punish-

ment, he shal for indignation graunt us our owne requeste, and after we shal well finde that it shal turne us to harme. Howe many men attayne healthe of bodye, that were better for their soule's helth their bodies were sicke stil! Howe many get out of prisone, that hap on such harme abrode as the prison should have kept them from! How many have been lothe to lose their worldye goodes, have, in kepyng of them, sone after lost their lyfe! So blind is our mortalitye, and so onware what wil fal; so onsure, also, what maner of mind we wyl have to morow, that God could not lightlye do man a more vengeaunce, than in this worlde to graunte him his own folishe wyses."

---

### SMOOTH TEACHERS.

"Some of them thinke, peradventure, thus.— This man maketh mucche of me now, and geveth me alsoe money to faste, and watche, and praye for him; but so I feare me would he doe no more if I should goe and tell him now, that all that I doe for hym will not serve him, but if he goe faste, and watch, and praie for himselfe to. For if I should sette thereto and saye farther, that my diligente intercession for hym should, I

trust, be the meane that God should the soner give him grace to amende, and faste, and watche, and praye, and take affliction in his owne body for the bettering of his synfull soule, he w<sup>d</sup> be wondrous wroth with that: for he would be lothe to have any such grace at all as should make him to leave of any of his mirth, and so sitte and mourne for his synne. Suche mind as this, lo, have there some of those that are not unlerned, and have worldly witte at wil; which tel great men such tales as perilously beguile them, rather than the flatterer that so telleth them woulde with a treue tale jeopard to lose his lucre.

“ Some there are also that suche tales tell them for consideration of an other feare: for seing the man sette sore upon his pleasure, that they despaire any amendement of hym, whatsoever they should shewe hym, and that seing also besyde that the man doth no greate harme, but of a gentle nature doth some good men some good, they pray God themself to send hym grace, and so they let him lie still in his fleshly lustes. \* \* \*  
\* \* \* And in such wise deale they with him, as the mother doth some tyme with her childe; which when the lytle boye will not ryse in time for her, but lie still in bedde and slugge, and when he is up, wepeth because he hath lyen so longe, fearing to be beaten at scole for his late

coming thither; she telleth him then that it is but early dayes, and he shal come tyme enough, and byddeth hym goe, good sonne, I warraunte thee, I have sent to thy master myselfe, take thy breade and butter with thee, thou shalte not bee beaten at all. And thus, that she maye sende him merye forth at the dore, that he wepe not in her syght at home, she studyeth not much on the matter, though he be taken tardye and beaten when he cometh to schole. Surely, thus I feare me fare there many friars and states chaplaines to, in comforte giving to great men, when they be loth to displease them. I cannot commend their thus doing, but surely I feare me thus they doe."

### No. III.

I am tempted to offer two or three further extracts from the *Utopia*, in this place, fearing their interruption of the narrative, and yet feeling that the *Life* and the *Works* of More illustrate each other, in so rare and beautiful a manner, that it is hardly possible to avoid taking them in connexion. In reading, for instance, the calm and cheerful sentiments of the *Utopians*, in

the prospect of death, what reader is there, who will not remember the serenity of the Author under that awful prospect?

“There are no images of God in their temples, therefore every one may represent him to his thoughts in their own way; nor do they use for him any other name than Mithras, their term in common for the Divine Essence, whatever otherwise they think of it: nor have they any forms of prayer, but such as every one of them may use without prejudice to his private opinion. \* \* \* \*  
 \* \* \* \* The priests and people offer very solemn prayers to God in a set form of words, which are so composed that whatever is pronounced by the whole assembly may be applied by any individual to himself. In these they acknowledge God to be the Author and Governor of the world, and the fountain of all the good they receive; they therefore offer him their thanksgiving. In particular, they bless him that they are born under the happiest government in the world, and are of a religious persuasion which they hope is the truest of all others. Be they mistaken, and there is a better government, or a religion more acceptable to him, they implore his goodness to let them know it: vowing that they resolve to follow him whithersoever he leadeth. But if their govern-

ment be the best, and their religion the truest, they pray that he may strengthen them therein, and bring all the world to the same rules of life, and the same opinions of himself: unless, in his unsearchable wisdom, he be pleased with a variety of religions.

“Then they pray that God may give them an easy passage, at last, to himself. They presume not to limit how early or late it should be: but, if a wish may be formed, without derogating from his supreme authority, they desire to be quickly delivered and taken to him, by the most terrible death, rather than to be long detained from seeing him by the most prosperous life.” \* \* \* \*

“They are nearly all of them firmly persuaded that good men will be infinitely happy in another state. Therefore, though they be compassionate to the sick, they lament no man’s death, unless they see him loth to part with life. This they esteem a very bad presage: as if the soul, conscious of guilt, and hopeless, feared to leave the body from some prepossession of approaching misery. They think a man’s appearance before God cannot be acceptable to him, who, being called, goeth not cheerfully, but is backward and unwilling, and as it were dragged to it. They are struck with horror when they see any die in this manner, and, carrying them out in silence and sorrow, praying God



to be merciful to the errors of the departed soul, they inter them."

---

Bishop Latimer tells, in one of his sermons, an admirable story of More's investigation into the causes of a great local inconvenience, the growth of the Goodwin Sands on the coast of Kent.—

"Here now, says he, is an argument to prove the matter against the preachers. Here was preaching against covetousness all the last year in Lent, and the next summer followed rebellion; *ergo*, preaching against covetousness was the cause of the rebellion. A goodly argument! Here was, I remember, an argument of Master More's which he bringeth into a book that he made against Billeney: and here, by the way, I will tell you a merry toy. Master More was once sent in commission into Kent, to help to try out, if it might be, what was the cause of Goodwin Sands and the shelves that stopped up Sandwich Haven. Thither cometh Master More, and calleth the country about him, such as were thought to be men of experience, and men that could of likelihood best certify him of that matter, concerning the stopping of Sandwich Haven. Among others, came in before him an old

man with a white head, and one that was thought to be little less than an hundred years old. When Master More saw this aged man, he thought it expedient to hear him say his mind in this matter, for being so old a man it was likely that he knew most of any man in that presence and company. So Master More called this old, aged man unto him, and said, 'Father,' said he, 'tell me, if ye can, what is the cause of this great arising here of the sands and shelves about this haven, the which stop it up, that no ships can arrive here? Ye are the oldest man that I can espy in all this company, so that if any man can tell the cause of it, ye of likelihood can say most to it, or at least wise more than any man here assembled.'—'Yes, forsooth, good master,' quoth this old man, 'for I am well nigh an hundred years old, and no man here in this company anything near unto mine age.'—'Well then,' quoth Master More, 'how say you in this matter?'—'Forsooth, Sir,' quoth he, 'I am an old man—I think that Tenterton Steeple is the cause of Goodwin Sands. For I am an old man, Sir,' quoth he, 'and I may remember the building of Tenterton Steeple, and I may remember when there was no steeple at all there. And before that Tenterton Steeple was in building, there was no manner of speaking of any flats or sands that stopped the haven: and therefore I think that Tenterton

Steeple is the cause of the destroying and decaying of Sandwich Haven.'——And even so, to my purpose, is the preaching of God's word the cause of rebellion, as Tenterton Steeple is a cause that Sandwich Haven is decayed."—*Latimer's Sermons.*

---

### RELIGIOUS TOLERATION.

A passage has been already quoted from this part of the Utopia, and the following is in the same spirit. "King Utopus judged it wrong to lay down any thing rashly, and seemed to doubt whether those different forms of religion might not all proceed from God, who might inspire men in a different manner, and be pleased with the variety. He therefore thought it indecent and foolish for any man to threaten and terrify another, to make him believe what did not strike him as true. Supposing only one religion to be true and the rest false, he imagined that the innate force of truth would at last break forth and shine with splendour, if supported only by the strength of reasoning, and attended to by a docile and unprejudiced mind. On the other hand, were such debates carried on with violence and tumult, since the most wicked are ever the most

obstinate, the best and holiest religion might be choked with superstition, as corn is with thorns and briars.

“ He therefore left men free, to believe as they saw cause: making only a solemn and severe law against those who should so far degenerate from the dignity of human nature, as to suppose our souls died with our bodies; or that the world was governed by chance, without a wise directing providence. For they all formerly believed, that there is a state of rewards and punishments after this life, and they now esteem those who think otherwise as unfit to be accounted men; degrading so noble a being as the soul of man, and ranking it with the beast. They look upon such men as totally unfit for human society, or to be citizens of a well-ordered commonwealth; since, with such principles, as oft as they dare, they will despise all their laws and customs: there being no doubt, that one who feareth nothing but the law, and apprehendeth nothing after death, will not scruple to break through all the laws of his country by fraud or force, when, by so doing, he can satisfy his appetites.

“ They never raise any who entertain such opinions, either to honours or offices; nor do they employ them in any public trust; but despise them as men of base and sordid minds. Yet

they do not punish them: *for they lay it down as a maxim, that a man cannot make himself believe any thing he pleases.* Nor do they drive any by threats to dissemble their thoughts.

“Thus, men are not tempted to lie, or to disguise their opinions, which (being a kind of fraud) is abhorred by the Utopians. They take care indeed to prevent their disputing in defence of these opinions, especially before the common people. But they suffer, nay, even encourage them to dispute in private with their priests and other grave men, being confident they will be cured of their madness, by the conviction which their reason will receive.”

FINIS.

---

*Houlstons, Printers, Wellington, Salop.*

BOOKS PUBLISHED BY HOULSTON AND SON.

**LETTERS on the Importance, Duty, and Advantages of EARLY RISING.** Addressed to Heads of Families, the Man of Business, the Lover of Nature, the Student, and the Christian. By A. C. Buckland. Sixth Edition, with an additional Letter, and a Preface. Price 5s.

"We cannot afford any more space for remarks on this little interesting and useful volume; but we should fail in our duty to the public, if we did not recommend every parent to make it one of the lecture books of his little family; and if he happen to have no time for the perusal of it himself, as his day is at present laid out, we can assure him that it will amply reward the effort, if he rises two hours earlier on the first morning after he has procured the book, to study and digest its contents."

*British Review.*

**LETTERS to an ATTORNEY'S CLERK,** containing Directions for his Studies and General Conduct. Designed and commenced by the late A. C. Buckland, Author of "Letters on Early Rising," and completed by W. C. Buckland. Price 5s.

"These letters are well written and sensible, and may, we believe, be safely recommended to the attention of the persons to whom they are addressed. The method of studying the law laid down in them, and the course of reading enjoined, display a very considerable knowledge of the subject, which in the present state of our jurisprudence is by no means an easy one. Upon the whole, a better Manual than the present cannot be put into the hand of an incipient Attorney."

*New Monthly Magazine.*

**SABBATH RECREATIONS:** or Select Poetry, of a Religious Kind, chiefly taken from the Works of the Modern Poets; with a few original Pieces never before published. A new Edition. With numerous Additions from English and American Poetry, Edited by Emily Taylor. 18mo. Price 4s. 6d.

**POETICAL ILLUSTRATIONS of PASSAGES of SCRIPTURE.** By Emily Taylor. Price 2s. 6d.

**LUCY NEWTON;** or, an Experiment in Education. Foolscap 8vo. Price 2s. 6d. in cloth.

**LETTERS from ELIZABETH WILLIAMS to ANNE MOWBRAY;** or, Justice to ourselves and others the Consequence of True Piety. Price 1s. 6d.

**PIOUS REFLECTIONS** for every Day in the Month. Translated from the French of Fenelon, Archbishop of Cambray. To which is prefixed the Life of the Author. 32mo. Price 1s.

**SELECT REMAINS of FENELON,** Archbishop of Cambray. Translated from the French. 32mo. Price 1s.

---











